

Ross Dowson archives – correspondence – Year 1971

European (international) correspondence: Feb.-July

- EU02_22 Letter from Europe, to Joe Hansen & Barry Sheppard (SWP, New York), re: large split in Ligue Communiste (France); upcoming IMG (GB) conference postponed
- EU03_06 Letter to Joe Hansen & Barry Sheppard, re: crisis in British IMG over “the Canadians” publishing *Socialist Women*; financial and health problems among comrades in France; the situation in the Chinese section and Peng’s status; Fourth International bureau assignments and European congress dates
- EU03_17 **RD Notebook** from the bureau, re: discussion with Ernest Mandel on his evaluation of French events; discussion with IMG (GB) on (*Red*) *Mole* taking a position at variance with the Canadian section and its failure to defend the record of the Canadian section
- EU 03_25 Letter to Barry Sheppard & Joe Hansen (SWP), re: Pete (Camejo?)’s visit, hassle over approval of RD’s FI minutes; IMG “brass” moves against *Socialist Women*; sharp debates on IMG politics; developments in France; Mandel’s disputes over *Intercontinental Press*
- EU03_30 Letter to Joe Hansen & Barry Sheppard (SWP), re: report meeting comrades of *Bandiera Rosa* (Canadians in Italy); report on Chinese comrades; a critical look at the European Workers Conference in Turin and the lack of transitional demands, RD speaks on Britain to applause
- EU03_99 Dated March; notes of a meeting with **Peng on Ho Chi Minh** on the origins of Ho’s army in northern Indochina; the mass support for Vietnamese Trotskyists under Ta Tu Tha and his murder by Ho Chi Minh’s army in 1948
- EU 04_02 Letter to Pat Jordon (G.B.) re: report of the Turin conference and rally; his report on Britain; expecting the IMG’s views on Quebec
- EU04_02 Letter to Caroline (Lund? SWP) re: shipment of books and documents; the Belgian farmers protest
- EU04_14 Letter to Joe Hansen & Barry Sheppard (SWP), re: difficulties following language at German convention; its low level of spirit and politics; RD’s contribution dumped; no women elected to NC; crisis of leadership in GIM-RKJ and dispute over building the youth group
- EU04_21 Letter to Barry (Sheppard, SWP), re: total lack of understanding with the Ceylon delegate on developments in Pakistan and Ceylon; the activities of the ouvrierist Swiss comrades; RD’s evaluation of the German conference disputed; failed attempt by Maitan and Mandel to rein in Hansen’s IP articles on Latin America

and their refusal to circulate the Domingo Letter; conflicting views on developments in European sections

- EU04_26 Letter to Roger Barnes, Australia, re: met your comrade Mary J. at the Turin conference; discussion of Australian comrades; our progress in Canada since you left, my Bruxelles address
- EU04_27 Letter to Joe Hansen & Barry Sheppard (SWP, New York), re: Tariq Ali meeting in Belgium; a FI bureau meeting discussing Vietnam and antiwar demonstrations; notes on Mandel's style of organizing
- EU05_03 *Intercontinental Press* (SWP, New York) article: "The Perfidious Role of the British in Indochina," review of book by G. Rosie
- EU05_04 Letter to George Rosie, London, re: RD's review of his book "The British in Vietnam," seeking information on Trotskyist leader Ta Tu Thau (for full article see *Labor Challenge* #30)
- EU05_04B Document: Article by R.D. "**What W.W.2 was all about**" (review of book by G. Rosie "The British in Vietnam")
- EU05_04C Letter to Joe & Barry (SWP, New York) re: discussion in the bureau on events in Bolivia; on April 24 antiwar mobilizations; Ceylon and May Day; Mandel's odd musings; shake-up in the North (Canada)
- EU05_11 Letter to Joe (Hansen) and Barry (Sheppard), re: Manon (L. of Montreal) gets the cold shoulder in Italy and Switzerland, but welcomed in Belgium; widespread ouvrierist tendencies; Krivine at Belgian congress where youth tendency fused with the section; discussion of its politics
- EU05_16 Document: article **on the commemoration of the Paris Commune** (published in *Young Socialist*) (Prose poem by R.D. on the Centenary of the Paris Commune)
- EU05_16B *ICP* (SWP, New York)_article: "Thousands Demonstrate for Socialist World" on Centenary of Paris Commune
- EU05_21 Letter to Jack (Barnes?, SWP) New York, re: RD's tight budget and cost of airmailing material; submitting expense sheet
- EU06_09 Letter to Joe (Hansen) & Barry (Sheppard, SWP) re: importance of attendance at United Secretariat meeting and French cadre week before the World Congress; four Canadians potential delegates; report of our IMG tendency and attendance at Glasgow meeting
- EU 06_10 Letter to Joe (Hansen) and Barry (Sheppard, SWP), re: bureau meeting and availability of Joe's document on Latin America; problems with the Ceylon

section; Brian (S) in Britain; report of earlier US-FI meeting; Sweden, Greece, more on Ceylon debacle

EI06_23 Pp 1,2, 7 of a letter to Joe (Hansen) and Barry (Sheppard, SWP), re: report on IMG congress; evaluation of new majority tendency

*07_08 *(continuation of June 23 letter, pp. 8 to 16): On the IMG congress and extensive debate on the politics of the new dominant tendency; intervention by Pierre (Frank, FI leader); Alan Harris speaks, Tariq Ali attacks; other Canadians support Tendency; Connie Harris's critical support; J-P B. greetings from the LC (France); ``Women's work`` approach to women's liberation (while no women nominees on NC list); Critical evaluation of commission on Socialist Women, Irish work and Irish Vietnam Solidarity Campaign; Organizational Report by Pat Jordan; chaos as majority slate debated*

EU07_13 Letter to Comrades Gisela and Ernest (Mandel), re: RD returning informal apparently personal money gift.

Feb 22, 1971

New York

Dear Joe and Barry; *Hansen, SWP*
Sheppard, SWP

A big dilemma over here--whether to light the fire or not. It hardly seems worthwhile but it is damnable cold. Solved it last night by lighting it--but what to do tonight?

The big development is the split in the Ligue Communiste and the repercussions that it is certain to have in the Italian movement.

Among the pile of correspondence that we are supposed to read before the meeting I found a copy of a printed IC internal bulletin. From a hasty scan I gathered that the leadership was having trouble with a minority tendency whose contributions to the ~~discussion~~ pre convention discussion were considered of such a character as tending to take it outside of the party. Charlier grabbed it, most was mithering it is lonely copy so I never had a chance to read it. However at one point in the meeting a phone call came in from Paris to the effect that the split had taken place.

Here is what I recall of it;

At a mass membership meeting in Paris attended by about 1,000 the Creac leadership that had opposed affiliation with the FI prior to the last world Congress launched an attack against both the Ligue Communiste and the FI as being right wing and then walked out with about 250 supporters.

According to Sender they have taken half the university student membership and 1/3rd the high school membership. Their forces are concentrated in Paris, Rouen and Marseilles. They have connections in France with La Voie Communiste and Groupe 66 in Marseilles. They also have international connections--the group of our late Italian comrade Illario and a group in Spain around a paper Bandiera Rosa headed by a Borja(sp). They were reported to have had about 25% of the Ligue Communiste membership at the last congress and are now estimated to have about 10% of the ~~membership~~ present membership. Livio considered the matter to be of very grave significance to the Italian section. I gather that Illario has 100 to 200 members in Milan and has been making modest connections from that base elsewhere. I gather that we have almost nothing in this key Milan area.

The general appreciation of this tendency both in France and internationally is that it is capitulationist to Maoism, adaptationist to Maoism and that it is spontaneist in the concept of the building of the party.

There was really no discussion on this development--there was a motion that the French prepare a simple and popular statement for Rouge. At one point it was interesting to hear Livio relate an experience with the Illario group. He was apparently participating in a united demonstration with other forces and Illario's supporters were trying to provoke the police as against Livio's line of building a mass action.

What the defection of this spontaneist force means for the ~~future~~ future evolution of La Ligue Communiste, the IMG and of course the whole international including the coming congress I will leave at this time to your speculation.

The IMG was tied up in a Spartacus conference this weekend so nothing was said about my attack on Red Mole. None of the documents for the IMG convention are out so far and it is now proposed to postpone it from Easter on to Whitsun which I gather is May 29-30-31. Tariq will not be there. He is taking a jaunt to Pakistan of a limited duration and preliminary to making a harder decision on where he is to work. Alan reported that Healy's trade union operation had a conference which according to the daily press attracted over 4,000. While polls show Labor has increased its popular majority over the Tories from 4.5 to 7.5 the IMG has published a leaflet on the Tory anti-labor offensive which attacks the idea of a Labor party government with a slogan-for a workers government based on Democratic trade unions. A big TUC rally is being held in Trafalgar Square Sunday so I will send in an article in a day or so on Britain

This meeting seemed to me ~~xxxxxx~~more than any others that I attended to lack any focus, meaning or purposes. Lots and lots of little bits of information. It seems that we are making real progress in Germany--but the Austrian operation had blown up again. The coming issue of Quatrieme was discussed. Amazing--Pierre makes no mention of our Quebec resolution which under my pressure they agreed to publish back in September and October. He doesn't even make any explanation other than that he doesn't actually have in his own hands a copy--although Alain has a copy and Ernest said he has a copy.

Naturally I was asked to take the minutes. If there is anything else of importance as I go through my notes I will let you know. Here are a couple of addresses

The Japanese Revolutionary Communist League sent is a new address for publications, booklets etc; ~~Taugeshob??~~
telephone 03-291-9727 ~~c/8 Tobunsha~~
neither I nor anyone else ~~Sarugakuchō 2-7-9-~~
could make out the two letters ~~Chiyodaku, Tokyo~~
that I have marked ??

Luxembourg address

LCR
7 rue Victor Hugo
Luxembourg, Grande-Duché de Luxembourg

Unity Movement of South Africa
C.T. Brecker, V.K. Ntshona
1 Caterham Road, Lewisham
England

The Feb 20-21 Herald Tribune reports 20 arrests in SA--"as far as newsmen could determine the 20 detained were either members of the Unity Movement or the African Peoples Democratic Union."

Ernest has pressed on me the task of writing up an article for the world press on recent developments in the Philippines (he has received a pile of clippings from the bourgeois press) I told him that it was ridiculous and that you in the US had connections with Philippine leftists on the West Coast. Are you acquainted with the facts of a big student struggle in early February and are you carrying anything on it in ICP shortly?

fraternally

Alan has a tape of the class on the FI given by Tariq in London wherein he attacks the SWP and LSA. I gather it was public--Pierre attended and said nothing. I will get a copy and send to you

Ross

Connie & Alan Harris

March 6m 1971
Bruxelles

New York *HANSEN, SWP (Veteran)*
Dear Joe and Barry *SHEPPARD, SWP (Youth)*

Hellish weather we have been having here. It is usually a matter of little concern ~~which~~ but without central heating there is nothing you are more conscious of. We had about 4 inches of snow last night but it has been cold and damp for over a week solid despite Gisela's assurances that it will only be a matter of a couple of days. And it is little better at the office than it is at the apartment which hardly seems worthwhile heating for one person even when you have cut off two of the rooms.

I havent heard from you about the first article I sent on the British labor front. Well this morning I sent another--a follow-up and a lengthy 10 pages of copy of diverse interesting little tidbits on the British scene. The union article can easily be cut if you feel it necessary--but as you can see big developments. As for the 10 page perhaps perhaps they can be scattered around a bit. Harry maybe able to dress up those letters to the editor of The Times, and women's liberation could use a couple perhaps

Good little item about Connie. She and Alan phoned over yesterday. The... ?? for the Environment capitaluated and they have the square. This weekend the IMG NC is being held. Under normal circumstances this would have been the very time to go but this NC is going to be in a turmoil over "the Canadians" and the situation is so tense that it is inevitable that I would get dragged into it in the worst possible way. So I told C and A that in my opinion I should not go--they agreed

Apparently they are out for a showdown with Tony Gorton and Socialist Women. At the bureau meeting of the 2nd as usual we were suddenly faced with a folio of materials as we were supposed to be discussing and dealing various matters. Among the pile of material from Britain ~~was~~ prob brought over ~~from~~ Julien on Feb 20-21 since the strike is still on was an internal bulletin devoted to the case of Socialist Women, a mimeo copy of a letter from Pat to ~~the~~ Toni---and a circular from Tariq to all branches if I recall correctly. I tried to get their gist as best I could. Of course no one says a word about these items--and it all makes one have the feeling of being a spy of some sort.

Tariq's ~~is~~ ~~is~~ is on the postponment of the IMG conference from Easter to May 30-31. It appears that while only a month ~~only~~ to go to the conference there is no documentation at all. Of course the CO takes the blame--tied up in putting out leaflets etc etc and not the least with the problems brought down on their heads by the tendency. In fact it seems to me to be turned into an attack on the tendency.

Their NC has moved in on Socialist Women. They have just gone ahead with an issue printed under their direct control in London while the ~~the~~ Nottingham women's group has its issue. Apparently the couple of comrades we have on the Nottingham editorial board were since ~~the~~ the non-IMG majority that their SW should be sunk. I gather that they didn't do this so there are two SWs. Pat's bulletin is somekind of attempt to establish that the Nottingham SW was all along an IMG affair--justifying the NC to do what it wants with it--and the tendency. His letter is another one of those petty scolding attacks on Toni. Apparently she was to be put on the griddle this weekend but now at last it looks like her child is approaching

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end, and she told Connie that she just cannot make the NC meeting.

Connie has been instructed to dump the liberation group she is in but I suggested that instead of defying these bureaucrats she should postpone any action hopefully until the IMG conference. I am going to phone them on Tuesday and then we will decide whether both of them will come over for the March 20 21 U.S. meeting or I will go over to England on the weekend of the 13th--next weekend. Of course there is some advantage in their coming over. Lan has to come anyway and one of you would be here I take it. But then I gather she feels that it is rather urgent that they have some discussion with me on . We will see

Last weekend Feb 27-28 and March 1 I went to Paris. This weekend would have been better in some ways as the Ligue is holding its NC meeting. However I was afraid that our old friends might not have sufficient funds for their rent ---I gather the \$140 might mean even last months rent. So I saw them. I had one hell of a time getting away. On Saturday evening they kept me so late that I decided to take a hotel room. ~~Then~~ Sunday morning everyone at the centre was tied up ~~at~~ with some anti-fascist actions so I saw no one intending to do that Sunday evening. But unknown to myself at the last moment our old friends had prepared a real feast with the aid of a Chinese friend and nothing would do but I stay there late into Sunday night. Thier isolation is a terrible thing. I talked to Vergeat about it --asking him to introduce one or another of the Paris youth who speak English to drop in on them ocassionally and keep them informed . But I doubt that anything will come of it. Perhaps I will try to carry that off next time I am in Paris myself.

Here is the score about their rent. It is true that they are anticipating an increase but it hasn't come yet. I opened up the door for a very frank talk on finances. They are very modest and hesitant about talking on such matters however I think they did open up. What they are worried about is how they are going to do anything about Pi-lan's teeth. As you know for some years now she has been having intestinal trouble. Her teeth have been bad and they are now convinced that the bad teeth are the cause of the intestinal trouble. They think she must have ~~her~~ her teeth removed and a set of false ones made. Lili has a very good dentist and they have gone so far as to consult him , he recommends such action and says it will cost something like \$500. It is possible that through one of the Krivines we could get it done just as well and cheaper. However that is not the immediate problem ...it is money. Apparently with the help of Lili and of their son they can pull together \$200. Can we get the other \$300. We should discuss that when you come. After we had had that out---several hours later they sort of raised the matter again, their embarasment etc.

They had ~~nothing~~ done nothing about the statement on the imprisoned Chinese for the very reason that they only had a French copy. Vergeat had not translated it for them. I did this. They agreed but I added a few descriptive words about the various comrades, their record---otherwise you just had a jam up of meaningless names. They agreed and I have turned the thing over to Vergeat who I assume has acted. Peng didn't want to add anything more and he agreed that he can do this later. In fact Lili has brought back some more news which when he gets it all he will wrote up. He hasn't had an opportunity to have a full chat with her yet.

One little thing he told me--it seems that Pablo had really got some of the Hong-kong comrades steamed up against him --convinced that they had missed the whole revolution and that Mao would tolerate if not welcome their collaboration. In this belief some 100 to 150 comrades one day very openly proclaiming who they were commenced to march as a group into China to be welcomed as collaborators. They were all immediately thrust into prison.

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Also at the U.S. meeting there turned up a letter from Pi-lan related what she had learned about the situation on Macoa. from Lili. According to this letter things are quiet there and quite secure. It appears that there is another person there also. The letter would allay all fears and any cause for us to take action. When I met them I first tried to assess their attitude to this person. You had suggested that it might be coloured by their past relations --in 1938-40 or thereabouts. In my opinion they did not show any factional or embittered personal attitudes to this person--and recognized that regardless of ~~on~~ their relations if there was any danger that we should help. They insist there are no dangers. What are we to do? ~~Disbelieve~~ the other person as to the circumstances there? I gather the information comes via Li fu-yen. Well there you are.

After this bit of a discussion they raised the matter of the International Information Bulletin September 1970 No 7. ---and that strange "letter from a Chinese Trotskyist addressed to an unidentified friend entitled Guerrilla Warfare, the Lesson of China. It so happened that while it is dated September 1970 I myself had only come across it as I was leaving for here and had a copy on me. Despite the fact that it is an attack on Peng you never mentioned it to me.

What do you think of this appearing in the International Bulletin. Now I recall how this came up. When I raised this Macoa matter they said oh yes --you mean the person ~~whom~~ letter appeared in the International Bulletin. When I quizzed them further they affirmed that that is who wrote that letter --they had read the Chinese version which was identifiable --it was circulate in the Far East.

~~On the other hand~~ I think that it is quite a shocking thing that the International Bulletin should carry that letter. I gather that it is an established fact that he is not a member of the Chinese--that he broke from them. Maybe those differences are no longer of importance. But do we recognize the Chinese. or don't we--and do we recognize Peng--that he should only know about it from reading it in the IB. I know I would be goddam made if suddenly I were to read in our International Bulletin a contribution of any kind from say Al Engler that I or we did not know about regardless of whether it attacked or agreed with my views on some matter

Remind me to discuss this with you for if I have the facts right It seems to me that this is an impermissible faction use of the International Bulletin. If I were Peng I would be raising hell here there and everywhere.

When you were talking to me in NY you mention that there was a visitor in Latin America. As you must have noted Livio was here when I got here. But I have since learned that Jean Pierre of France is and has been in LA for some little while. This was mentioned in passing --there appears to be big interest in the spanish edition of QI--he has orders galore from Bolivia Uruguay etc which they talked about not filling until getting some money.

You haven't written me about the availability of material from there on Philippine developments. Ernest is pressing me and I am stalling. The old heat is on again on Africa. Ernest asked me about taking this up again. I expressed surprise--how hadn't we dismissed the one contribution as worthless and had I not noticed that the other valuable time was decided from the minutes to go into a ~~ahiers~~ Rouge. Yes Yes. Ten you should have heard the discussion--~~this~~ informal and friendly about an African bureau--it seems that Pablo had one or wanted one and now they are talking about our bureau

with out Pablo. I procrastinated and will have it out with Ernest privately

By now you should have the minutes of the last U.S. and materials that arise from it. So the Bengali fund is now on a campaign basis. I have suggested to the Canadian comrades that we should consider holding forums across Canada this month on the Indian elections which would provide us with the basis for making a modest financial appeal for this work. I managed to get a few changes in the allocation of funds for the coming world congress. But there still seem to me to be some strange flowers on the list and peculiar allocations. To take up some of it you have to know what we have or what the potentialities of the connections. I am surprised at the small ~~Wilmington~~ representation particularly in light of the fund allocation for the U.S. -----however I see it is presented as tentative so we can discuss this shortly

A couple of dates I should give you

The French congress is April 10-11-12
German congress is the same date
Belgian congress April 24-25

There is a workers conference in Italy March 27-28 all European

The March U.S. meeting is March 20-21
The April April 17-18

May

May 22-23

The IMG congress

May 29-30-31

I have raised the matter with Ernest of my being available for a bit of a tour--- his first reaction was ---he didn't see the practicability of it. There is an Austrian congress in April which no one here wants to go to---he sees a big language problem ---German ~~fundamentally~~ It is generally agreed over the April 10 weekend that Livio will go to the German---that Ernest will go to a Swedish cadre school and that I will go to the French. Of course both E and L cannot go to France. I have written our Quebecois to suggest that one of them preferably Manon come over for the French---I think she inherited some money recently.

I had a good excuse to phone Wannstock---I had some material that I know he wanted---he speaks English perfectly---but he suggested I mail it to him---didn't get an invite. Not a soul has turned up at the office. Had a good talk with Rousset while in Paris where I managed to pick up some Rouge and take out a subscription which Ernest assures me I will receive. That student action was really big. I am enclosing a copy of a youth paper that the comrades put out right after

U.S. = United Secretariat (FI)

comradely

Ross

Peng on Ho Chi Minh -- Paris -- March 1971

(From handwritten notes on a discussion in Paris in March 1971 with the prominent Chinese Trotskyist leader Peng by RD)

Old stories of Ho Chi Minh—

This is about a very old communist I first saw in Canton in 1926. He worked for Borodin (*the Russian Comintern representative in China—ed.*), lived in the building of Borodin, did certain technical work – had a connection with some forces in Indochina – his name was Nguyen Ai Kou. I never talked with him – I know him only to shake hands – he didn't know Chinese.

I often went with Pi Lan to the Borodin building so I saw him many times.

Later I heard during the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945 – that he had gone into the province of Kwan-si near Indochina – especially since the Japanese army had occupied Indochina. The Kuomintang helped him to organize an army of around 2000 forces – they stayed on the border area. They gave him arms and supplies – I only heard about this since the Japanese surrendered. Ho Chi Minh's troops expanded quickly and with the Kuomintang army went into Indochina. Later the Kuomintang troops withdrew from Indochina. Ho Chi Minh's army occupied the north area.

After the end of the war French imperialism returned to take over. At first Ho Chi Minh's forces occupied some limited areas in the North – the South was totally occupied by the French. I arrived in Indochina in January 1950 from Hong Kong. When war finally came to Saigon – Sholong, a Chinese city very near. At that time we contacted our comrades – at this time they were a small underground (group of) about 12 in the Saigon area. The organization was just being reorganized because the Trotskyist movement had gone through several stages: first in the early 30s many many students were studying in France and Trotsky was just expelled from Russia – for a certain time he lived in France – Leon Trotsky contacted many communists at this time – the movement developed – many young people from the East were influenced by Trotskyism – Ceylonese and Indochinese. Yaminishi studied in England at this time. The German struggles (were happening at this time) – the revolution was defeated (due to) CP policies.

So a number of students from Indochina studying in France were influenced by Trotskyism. These students returned to Indochina – to the southern area. They organized a Trotskyist movement there. Ta Tu Tha was the leader, a prominent writer. He was a big speaker – I heard about this. For several years around 1935 the Trotskyist movement developed very quickly. It has thousands of supporters. The cadre was small, influenced by Ta Tu Tha, who organized mass meetings of thousands who went to hear him. He was elected a member of parliament, which was French-dominated. From this you can see that the Trotskyist movement had influence.

The situation seemed to be hopeful but French imperialism was frightened by our influence – the cause attracted big masses. The French began to suppress the movement

especially when the war broke out – perhaps after it broke out. Most of the cadre were arrested – imprisoned; some were sent by the French to Madagascar. During the war the movement was suppressed and the Japanese continued the suppression.

At the end of war the Trotskyists were released and returned from Madagascar. They reorganized the Trotskyist movement again. (This was a) new stage – some Trotskyists were demoralized; some started out again. Ta Tu Tha was the leader.

About 1948-49 Ho Chi Min's forces developed in the south near Saigon. Saigon was the main base of the Trotskyists, and especially famous was Ta Tu Tha. Ho Chi Min went to get him. I don't know what happened. According to comrades Ho Chi Min invited certain people to go to a certain area controlled by his army. According to comrades Ta Tu Tha believed Ho Chi Min to be honest – while some comrades were sceptical. Finally Ta Tu Tha went and of course he was arrested and murdered. Some papers in Saigon published the news. Since then some people – cadres – left Saigon for France – perhaps they were still alive when we came. Nguyen Ai Kou was in France. Peng came here (to France) in 1951. Some comrades told us about it – Antoni (?) wrote some articles for the (*US-SWP*) Militant.

The small cadre was demoralized by the murder. When we came to Saigon we met two comrades – one of the leaders, René, studied in France in the late 1930s. He participated in the French Trotskyist movement with Pierre F(rank) – also participated in the Spanish Civil War, and he wrote some articles for the French Trotskyist press, staying for one and a half years. Comrades thought the Chief of Staff in Ho's area was a Trotskyist – other Vietnamese believed him – that they (*the Trotskyists?—ed*) would take power.

(end)

ON THE DECLARATION BY THE INDOCHINESE OPPOSITIONISTS ²²

September 18, 1930

The declaration, as far as I can judge from my totally insufficient acquaintance with conditions in Indochina, in its main outlines correctly expresses the tasks of the Indochinese Communists. The following observations have the aim of adding to the declaration, making it more precise, and eliminating possible misunderstandings.

1. It is necessary to speak more clearly, more fully, and more precisely about the *agrarian question*: the role and significance of the semifeudal landed proprietors and of those with large landholdings in general; and about how much land the revolution would have at its disposal and as a fund for land distribution if it expropriated the large landed proprietors in the interests of the poorest peasants. The *peasant question* is left out of the declaration altogether.

Unless the regime of colonial enslavement is overthrown, the expropriation of the large and medium-size landowners is impossible. These two questions, the national question and the land question, must be linked in the closest possible way in the consciousness of the workers and peasants. Of course this question requires detailed study. Possibly such research has already been carried out. At any rate the declaration should contain a clear formulation on the *agrarian revolution*.

2. On the second page of the declaration it is said that the masses "believed naively that national independence could free them from poverty; but in the recent period a great many of them have seen their error." This is obviously an incorrect formulation. National independence, as can be seen from the declaration itself, is a necessary element of the Indochinese revolution. However it is hardly likely that the entire Indochinese peasantry has come to understand the necessity for the revolutionary overthrow of French imperialist rule. And it is all the more doubtful that the Indochinese masses have *already* understood the inadequacy and illusoriness of a liberation that would be solely *national*. Here the Communists have before them a vast arena for agitation and propaganda. It would be very dangerous to believe that the masses have already understood something which actually remains to be explained to them, or which can only be explained to them in the living context of the mass struggle. It is precisely in the interest of such explanatory work that it is necessary, as stated above, to link all the needs, demands, and protests of the peasants, for land, financial aid, against militarism, and so forth, with the struggle against foreign imperialism and its "national" agents, that is, the Indochinese bourgeoisie.

3. On page three we find the following: "Every theory of class collaboration constitutes ideological camouflage for the rule of the capitalist class." The thought expressed here is completely correct, but it is put in a way that can provide grounds for misunderstandings. We do not reject *all* collaboration between classes. On the contrary, there is a certain kind of class collaboration that we seek after with all our strength: that is the collaboration between the proletariat and the *poor peasantry*, as well as with the most oppressed and exploited *lower layers of the urban petty bourgeoisie*. This kind of revolutionary collaboration between classes, which can be made a reality only on the condition of an uncompromising struggle against the national bourgeoisie, is such that it transforms the proletariat into the *true leader of the nation*, if by the word nation is understood the overwhelming majority of the oppressed

and exploited masses of the town and countryside as opposed to the antinational bloc between the propertied classes and imperialism.

4. On page four there is the statement that nationalism, "which at all times has been a reactionary ideology, can only forge new chains for the working class." Here nationalism is taken abstractly as a transcendent suprasocial idea that always remains reactionary. This is neither a historical nor a dialectical way of posing the question, and it opens the door for incorrect conclusions. Nationalism has not always been a reactionary ideology, not by far, and it is not always one today either. Can one say, for example, that the nationalism of the Great French Revolution was a reactionary force in the struggle against feudal Europe? By no means. Even the nationalism of the late-arriving and cowardly German bourgeoisie in the period from 1848 to 1870 (the struggle for national unification) represented a progressive force against Bonapartism.²³

At the present time the nationalism of the most backward Indochinese peasant, directed against French imperialism, is a revolutionary element as opposed to the abstract and false cosmopolitanism of the Freemasons and other democratic bourgeois types, or the "internationalism" of the social democrats, who rob or help to rob the Indochinese peasant.

The declaration states quite correctly that the nationalism of the bourgeoisie is a means for subordinating and deceiving the masses. But the nationalism of the mass of the people is the elementary form taken by their just and progressive hatred for the most skillful, capable, and ruthless of their oppressors, that is, the foreign imperialists. The proletariat does not have the right to turn its back on *this kind* of nationalism. On the contrary, it must demonstrate in practice that it is the most consistent and devoted fighter for the national liberation of Indochina.

5. Also on page four is the statement that "the Indochinese workers themselves demand" a simultaneous struggle for national independence, democratic freedoms, and socialist revolution. This formulation is open to criticism in many respects. First of all a bare reference to the opinion of the workers is not yet proof: there are various tendencies and points of view among the workers and many of them are mistaken ones. Furthermore, it is very doubtful that the Indochinese workers have actually brought the national, democratic, and socialist elements of the revolution together as a single whole in their thinking as yet. Here again, a task that should just now become the main content of the work of the Communist Party is presented as one that has already been resolved. Finally, and no less importantly, it is unclear from this formulation what "democratic freedoms" are being discussed. The next sentence speaks openly about the "conquest of democratic freedoms by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat." This is, to say the least, an imprecise formulation. The concept of democratic freedoms is understood by vulgar democrats to mean freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of assembly, free elections, etc. The dictatorship of the proletariat, instead of these abstract freedoms, places in the hands of the proletariat the material means and instruments for its own emancipation (in particular the printing presses, meeting halls, etc.). On the other hand, the democratic revolution is not confined to the so-called democratic freedoms only. For the

peasants the democratic revolution is first of all the solution of the land question and emancipation from the burdens of taxation and militarism, which are impossible without national liberation. For the workers the shorter working day is the keystone of democracy, for that is the only thing that can give them the opportunity to really participate in the social life of the country. All of these tasks can and will be completely solved only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which bases itself on the semiproletarian masses of the city and countryside. This, of course, is what we should be explaining to the advanced workers even now.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat is something we have yet to come to, that is, the masses numbering many, many millions have yet to be drawn to that perspective. In our agitation of today, though, we are obliged to start from *what exists*. The struggle against the bloody regime of the French occupation should be conducted with slogans calling for thoroughgoing and consistent democracy. The Communists should be the best and bravest fighters against military injustice, for freedom of speech and assembly, and for an Indochinese constituent assembly. We cannot arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat by way of an a priori denial of democracy. Only by struggling for democracy can the Communist vanguard gather the majority of the oppressed nation around itself and in that way move toward the dictatorship which will also create the conditions for transition to a socialist revolution in inseparable connection with the movement of the world proletariat.

It seems to me that much of what was said on this point in the manifesto to the Chinese Communists can also be applied to Indochina.

6. Again on page four it is stated that three communist parties and three nationalist parties recently united into a single Communist Party of Indochina. The reference to this is made in passing and takes up only two lines. However, from the point of view of the Opposition, as well as that of the Indochinese revolution as a whole, this is the central question. What do these six groups stand for—in particular, these three nationalist groups? What are their programs and social composition? Isn't there a danger that an Indochinese Kuomintang is being created under the name of the Communist Party? The declaration says quite rightly that our task in relation to this newly formed party is to introduce ideological clarity. But in order to do just that, the declaration itself should, as far as possible, define the *true nature of the newly formed party* more fully and precisely. Only on this basis will it be possible to determine our policy toward it.

7. The slogans with which the declaration closes (page 5) are in part too abstract and in part incomplete. They should be made more precise and enlarged upon in the light of what we have said above (agrarian question, national element, democratic slogans as transitional slogans, eight-hour day, etc.).

In my criticisms I have proceeded on the basis of full confidence in our unanimity of thought, in regard to which the declaration leaves no doubt. The aim of the observations presented here is to arrive at a more carefully formulated declaration. On the other hand it is only too obvious to me that my criticism in turn suffers from the defect of abstractness owing to my inadequate familiarity with the social structure and political history of Indochina. For that reason I am not proposing any particular formulations. My comments are presented with only one purpose in mind: to point out the direction in which more precise and concrete answers should be sought to the questions of the Indochinese revolution.

April 2, 1971
2nd etage
225 Ave Paul Deschanel
Bruxelles 1030

Pat Jordon (G-B)

Dear Pat

A couple of days ago I received from Canada a report along with some photos of the action the Canadian comrades carried out in solidarity with our Czech co-thinkers. They had already sent a set to Rouge so I thought that Mole would be the next best bet to handle it. I did not send a covering note as I mailed the material under air printed matter rates.

I hope the Red Mole has space to carry it

Last weekend I attend^{ed} the workers conference at Turin. Everyone was very much disappointed that none of you comrades were able to make it. The conference itself was quite successful--about 65 attended. The rally on the Sunday morning had a very fine militant spirit--there were about 500---the theater itself had seating capacity of 400 and there were many persons in the aisles. I am sure that meeting will give a real lift to the Turin movement which is composed of very young and vigorous comrades. The literature sales were terrific

When it was apparent that none of you were going to make it I suggested that it might be a good idea if I gave a short report on recent workers struggles in Britain. ...how could there be a serious European workers conference that did not say something on the broadest and most militant struggles that are taking place in Europe--the struggle against the Industrial Disputes Act. Livio thought that it was a good idea.

So I gave about a ten minute report. Of course it was very general. I told the comrades that I did not feel competent to deal with the tactical aspects of the struggle and the specific role of the IMG. I limited myself to a few observations on the significance of the struggle itself, the character of the British working class, its revolutionary potential and the big opportunities that are opening up for the IMG in the next period. In passing I referred to Trotsky's Whither Britain--Livio who translated for me made an aside that he had just edited an Italian edition of this work.

Looking forward to receiving your contribution to the discussion the the Quebec developments ~~XXXX~~ has provoked in our ranks. I have told the Toronto office to expect it--I would appreciate a copy there.

*Should you circulate that bulletin of material on Que
I am sure that Toronto comrades would be pleased to forward
your material from other left tendencies besides the CP fraternally*

April 2, 1971

(found? -SWP)

Dear Caroline;

Hope you got all your personal documents OK. I sent them airmail even though you did not ask me to do so. After all in all probability someone is coming over for the 17th and 18th and they could transport them. So I assumed you wanted them in a hurry. There were a group of photos in that envelope which I have not sent as they would have really skyrocketed the price.

All is well. I am now hoping for a little peace and quiet so I can do some of the work that I had planned. What with the various little developments here and the British struggles which I thought we had to cover I have hardly done anything at all that I had planned. The British mail containing the books that I sent at least in advance by one month of my coming has not got through yet. But I can go ahead without this material

Yes, I saw the Belgian ~~shock~~ street episode. Well I came downstairs right after it I should say. ...and saw the smoke from the police cannisters still rising. The damage was very extensive. I was going to write it up but then we might disagree with ~~the~~ La Gauche which must certainly deal with it. My impression is that they tend to dismiss the farmers movement as automatically falling into the hands of the reaction. In Canada the unions have made real efforts to establish relations with the farm movement and it seems clear to me that the farm movement by and large there is going to play a radical role. The airport struggles in Japan are interesting in this respect.

But this is just a short note to cover the clippings which I am sure Joe is very anxious to have

all the best

Ross

Did Peter give you the copy of the Louise Michel book on the Paris Commune that I sent back with him ---for you or Mary Alice. The womens liberation movement is missing the boat on Louise Michel the famous Red Virgin of the Paris Commune. I see Maspero has published a two volume memoir of her. I must pick it up if I have the dough

April 14, 1971

Clayton Maynard?
Dear Joe and Barry;

I got back late Monday night from the German conference in Koln. It was an exhausting experience. It was held outside of the city in an isolated community ~~and~~ the sessions were very long and the food was ~~very~~ inadequate. There were few comrades for me to speak to. Of course they were busy ~~from~~ all the time with the sessions and with what little time was left with subsidiary committees. Few comrades spoke English -- they appear to know it like Ontarions know French -- ~~practically~~ practically nil. I and a young Copenhagen comrade were the only foreign guests -- plus a French comrade who works in Germany among Spanish emigre groups. I was dependent on Gisela for translation and for a short period a Koln woman comrade. It was difficult to follow things. But I do not think that is just a problem of Gisela's translating but the general confusion of the congress ~~and~~ There was one whole problem that I could not grasp during the sessions; was not too ~~satisfied~~ satisfied with Gisela's subsequent interpretation, asked the Danish comrade who apparently is quite knowledgeable of German, and he said that he did not understand it at all, and finally after closeting with David (an old timer and leading Frankfurt union functionary with excellent command of English) got a totally different picture than Gisela gave me. In my opinion it was really key to have someone here with a good command of German. But here is what I got

There were 61 voting delegates and candidates. The number of persons at the Monday session (Easter Monday holiday) was about 55 -- it appears that some of the Hamburg comrades left Sunday night to miss the traffic jam. While it was an open membership convention I wouldn't think there were ever more than 70-75 persons present. It was reported that there are 120 members in the adult organization ~~and~~ (GIM) -- and 250 in the youth (RKJ) I was told that there is not much dual membership although a considerable number of the delegates and candidates were young comrades (but there is a problem here as you will see later). At anyrate it is obvious that the conference attracted very few other than delegates and candidates, despite the fact that transportation is excellent, distances are short and ~~the~~ living standards are relatively high. There was no spirit at the congress, they neither opened nor closed with the Internationale. The chair was most casual in the conduct of the sessions -- they allowed interjections and cross-discussion, some comrades spoke many times on the same agenda point. The congress had no political focus -- and the movement appears to have no real authoritative leadership. All in all it was a very low low level affair.

I arrived Saturday morning in time to sit in on the closing hour of the plenum. Both Monte and David suggested either that afternoon or Sunday morning that it would be good if they could arrange for me to address the congress for about 20 minutes, I of course said yes I would like to very much. On the Monday mentioned it again but they never made any adjustments. Then a little later Monte then in the chair brought it in a very casual way before the delegates -- there were several loud protests, largely I gather on the basis of the short age of time -- Willy one of the loudest -- that if they heard me they would have heard the Danish comrade and the French. So it was dumped. There were only a couple of women in attendance. One of them gave the organizational report and contributed several times to the discussion. I had forgotten that she had given the report and during one of her contributions which Gisela did not translate as she said she was adding nothing new I asked Gisela if she was one of the leading comrades. She laughed -- you and the American comrades would say so but we wouldn't -- she said. She was the only woman among the 23 nominees for the new national committee. They elected 15 -- and she didn't make it. During the financial report and elections Gisela asked a young women comrade from Koln

to translate for me. There was a three or four way tie ~~between~~ and another vote was called to determine the alternates with ~~the~~ sole woman nominee still in the running. As my translator was voting I forgot my ~~observer~~ observer status and made some comment to the effect aht it was very unfortunate that the woman comrade did not get elected. My translator petulantly replied that she would not vote for her "just" because she was a woman. Fortunately our comrade did get elected as an alternate. From what I have seen so far not only doesn't the European movement understand women's liberation but the few women in the movement are no help in developing an understanding. When I was at Turin talking with a woman comrade about women's liberation she attacked a photo that appeared in the Militant reading Women of the World Unite -ridiculing it for its none class character. When I saw it reproduced in Rouge of a week ago my first reaction was that they too might make a sectarian attack on it --fortunately they didn't

Livio came to give an international report in French which was translated into and took from 1;30 to 4. I treid to follow it on my own --one of those all encompassing jobs of his. Boy are they making a lot of that Vietnamese letter in the Militant; a big play for the Argentinian terrorists; some comments on the coming world congress and the differences expressed in the previous one. Only two comrades took the floor after the report. David was not satisfied with Livio's explanation of the differences held by the minority on LA. Willy embarassedly explained that they have ~~not yet~~ got ~~the~~ Joe's and Livio-Ernest-Gisela documents out. ~~yuk~~. but the translation was almost done and they would be available very shortly. The other questioner was Ingo, a leading Stuttgart activist who asked why our Argentinian army was called a peoples army and not a workers and queiried our uncritical attitude to the Vietnamese leadership--referring to something in Rouge. Livio replied that Rouge article were not necessarily the views of the international or even the French leadership and took on the French Lambertists for their sectarian attitude to the Vietnam leadership and struggle. Livio left right after his report but very demonstratively before the delegates got up and came over to shake hands with me saying he would see me next week. I wonder if I shouldn't have got his speech translated--but then it would have been Gisela's. Before the sessions next morning one of the old guard who gave the youth report got into a conversation with me--his name is Johannes Seiffert--he knew John Riddell when he was here. He asked me if I could get him Peng's documents. I gather the German comrades only circulated the German translations and they translated only what they thought were the key documents.

Would you mail them to him--with bill I suppose--Johannes Ernest Seiffert
34 Gottingen Stellwanne 9 W. Germany

While I am at it I should give you the address of the Danish comrades. I am quite sure this is not the address we have in Canada--for an exchange of papers - SUF Guldborgves 28 DK 2000 Kobenhavn F Denmark
I got into several short discussions with the Danish comrade--a fellow of about 25--a student--member of their leading body. He told me that they have 70 members and are quite active in women's liberation. I told him that if he would take it up with their leading body and the Swedish comrades and suitable arrangements could be made I would be very happy to make a trip to address meeti they would arrange. English works in Scandinavia. He was enthusiastic and will write me. He thought that Red Mole was a bad paper--we had a bit of a talk about England and I am sending to his private address the SWP Internal Information Bulletin of the IMG 1970 conference discussion. There are three or four sittin here in the office. Incidnetly George J put on a very nice display of Pathfinder books--I salted the display with some copies of the ISR that I had brought for reading. Does Mannheim I suppose it is get copies of the ISR? A comrade Dalmer from the Koln area reported that he is editing a collected works of Trotsky in German. It is going to be complete--they are not coming out in order of date--a couple are out now--dealing with Germany and I think Spain--and they have already printed a paperback selection from these couple of volumes that sells dirt cheap. CIM is buying in bulk--if there is a market we should order

As I understand it there were actually three positions. 1) those who want to build a mass youth organization (Stuttgart) 2) those who want to build what they call a youth cadre organization but without doing so on a national plane (I think this is the Hamburg position) and 3) those who want to build a youth cadre organization organized on a national basis.

What is this about cadre organization? I couldn't understand it from Gisela. It seems to me she makes a sort of ~~xxx~~ mystique of Germany, SDS etc. And I don't think she understood what the German leadership expounding the 3rd position were about. The retiring secretary gave this youth cadre organization a two year projection. I pointed this out to her and she dismissed it. Then I told her about the British discussion on the fusion of Spartacus and IMG. She denied that the British are discussing this at all--although as I told you Peter Gowan actually formally proposed it at the IMG meeting a few weeks ago. ~~Ingo~~ A comrade Ingo who holds one of the opposition views--I think No 2 made some comment that his view was that of the Ligue Communiste. Gisela said she did not understand him.

So I managed to get David aside and have a talk with him. Yes, GIM is the organization of the German Trotskyist cadre. But they don't see any perspective of building it--not even through RKJ--by recruiting through and from it or its activities giving added attractiveness to GIM and it recruiting workers, adults, young adults. They are trying to carry out a big maneuver. Not only is the old Trotskyist cadre worn out but the working class as such doesn't have much possibilities. But there is a unique youth situation...elements of SDS. They consider these to be cadre

That they mean by cadre I gather are revolutionary types who are sophisticated who are articulate in certain areas of revolutionary theory, who are prestigious who from time to time may well be able to carry off some big flashy actions. They don't mean working men and women, students youth who have assimilated some of the basic elements of Trotskyism and who going about building a Trotskyist movement, through united fronts and mass actions around broad radicalizing issues.

They are out to win this element of radical youth ~~xxxxx~~ this cadre to a Trotskyist youth organization organized on a national basis. They think that in two years time they can achieve this and what there is of GIM will fuse with it into a common Trotskyist cadre organization I would suppose of a quantitatively and qualitatively different scope

This is a version of what Ernest was telling me very heatedly down at this office one day--- the revolutionary vanguard of ~~xxxxxxx~~ some tens of thousands in Britain who know what the CP and what the LP is, who we only completely cut ourselves off from if we identify with the Labor Party in any way at all. That is how it comes through to me. I am sending the documents of the congress which of course I am unable to read. I hope that this little ~~xxxxx~~ ploy of the majority is expounded with some clarity so that we can come to grips with it.

How they assess the German congress, what they think they have to work with I do not know. From the vote and the general atmosphere in the congress I would guess that the various groups will continue to work on their own from their own understanding of Trotskyism. Unfortunately I do not have the impression that the German section is internationally oriented--European possibly but not Canada-U.S. etc.

I think the ouvrierist impression I got of the German work from the report in Turin made by Ingo is erroneous--probably flows from the work of the Stuttgart comrades. ..certainly not the views of the Frankfurt comrades. You don't go

the impression there is a national movement in Germany with common concepts of many things. The movement has developed very unevenly. Mannheim is the center--and what will happen when it tries to instal itself in Frankfurt

I do not know whether you have received INPREKORR--Is this the answer to Intercontinental. They plan to put this out once a month. Internationale will be coming out every other month--but they expressed doubts as to the possibilities.

April 21, 1971

Dear Barry;

(Sheppard, SWP)

Joe is leaving tomorrow morning for NY but I think that it is worthwhile putting a few things that developed over the past week on paper. Things are hot in Pakistan but unfortunately Tariq could not even get over here to present a draft of a statement to the U.S. We did however have Upahli here for the Ceylon discussion. But instead of his heading for that part of the world they all seemed intent on his making a tour of the U.S. of A to pick up some gold from the streets over there. With that offer not being taken up it looks like he may be headed for some Indian point adjoining the island. After a short discussion with him the other day at the office however I think that it is best that he shouldn't go anywhere near Ceylon or any other place where we have possibilities. He is one of these centralizers. He was telling Vergeat and myself that the international leadership ~~is~~ is responsible for ~~them~~ all the problems in Ceylon--that instead of taking verbally correct positions they should have moved in at so and so date back in the 40s and several other times in the 50s and chopped off heads. I hope Vergeat tells Ernest of this ~~little~~ discussion and they change their plans about sending him down there--with our hard earned money.

Joe is bringing the statements on both Pakistan and Ceylon back with him. Unfortunately they do not have any real information on either area other than what can be gleaned from the bourgeois press. We have not heard from Bala over all this period other than that long very general letter for public consumption ~~from Bala~~ of a couple of weeks ago. And there is nothing here from India either. With Tariq not being here to give us the benefit of his experience Ernest looked over the U.S. and finally asked Vergeat to lead off--which on an extemporaneous basis he valiantly attempted to do.

There were the usual three or four items that are to show the recipients of the minutes that we are on top of all world developments.

But two items are worth commenting on. Pia contrary to the impression that Gisela gave me attended the Swiss ~~meeting~~ ^{meeting}--In the minutes this appears as a conference of the Swiss section. The Swiss here referred to are of course no more a section than the Uruguayans from whom we dissociate ourselves last meeting. According to Pia this was in reality a conference, called by the Ligue Marxiste Revolutionnaire--its purpose was to bring into the organization some elements who have heretofore been organized in a Geneva group called Rouge, (I am not sure of the name) If I got it right the ~~combined~~ now combined operation is about 220 to 250 strong. There were 100 voting but I gather that the rest are emigres who for reasons of security cannot have formal membership. Pia mentioned the tremendous activity of this group--they are the most ouvrierist ~~of~~ all the European groups. He described how they hit the factories with leaflets--and then taken in their paper. They have good sales. ~~But~~ Pia said that ~~the~~ the leaflets deal with bread and butter questions and in the log absence of the union brass talking in these terms (the unions have had a voluntary no-strike pledge with the bosses since 1937) get a very good reception. Following this high powered leafletting the comrades ~~sold~~ ^{sold} the papers--and they sell ~~them~~ ^{them}--but Pia said that the paper is quite irrelevant to the ~~the~~ workers experience and the sales are based on a sense of gratitude by the workers for the previous leaflets. He told the U.S. the result of a tremendous campaign the Swiss comrades reported to the Turin conference. We were going hell bent, getting what appeared to be a real response from a group of workers at a typewriter plant--when the trade union brass made a slight adjustment and like that--just cut us out.

Pia went on to talk about the general problem of building a Swiss section. It seems that the LMR is almost entirely confined to Lausanne ~~and with~~

The winning of this new group takes them into Geneva. Good—but sounds better than it is. This operation is entirely confined to the French area of Switzerland and obviously an outgrowth of La Ligue Communiste de France. The French only account for 20% of the population of Switzerland—the German speaking population accounts for about 75% and is concentrated in the main industrial areas. Pia described the group as being heavily petty bourgeois—apparently ~~mainly~~ of a unique character—professionals lawyers, doctors engineers teachers ~~and~~ not coffee house types, very serious and dedicated—but petty bourgeois nonetheless. They are having their congress in September-October where they will take up the question of affiliation to the 4th. I understand from Gisela that this will probably bring a split in the organization but not a large one. This report was the most interesting one that I have heard—but was met with considerable irritation. It was not challenged however in anyway.

While we ~~are on~~ ^{are on} the subject of reports—I made a few observations on the German conference following a somewhat incoherent but largely rah rah ,rah report by Gisela. All I said was I was unable to comment on the political level of the congress as the two political reports were verbal and provoked no discussion. In a few words I referred to David's contribution where he posed the three positions expressed around the youth document and how in our experience we were building not cadre youth organizations but broad action oriented youth organizations ~~which~~ largely student with the adult organization being the cadre organization. Also ~~made~~ made a few observations on the leadership situation—that they had only one professional and gave my version of the vote. Got corrected here by Gisela very heatedly but it seems that I was wrong...there were even more comrades abstaining on one of the two key votes than I thought—I had 2—she had 6. So much the worse. The reaction to my supplementary comments was explosive and now looking back I do not think that I should have bothered. Those who attend these meetings are pretty blind—and I have an idea how they present my observations to in this case the German comrades.

Intercontinental Press came up under publications. It was the last item and Livio had to leave in the midst of the very tense situation or his air ticket would have been invalid. They probably planned that it should be the last item for ~~they~~ created a very sharp atmosphere which if it had come up earlier would have thrown gloom over the entire US meeting. Ernest, solidly backed by Livio wanted to pass a motion, all duly recorded that would commit Joe to submitting all controversial material on Latin America to Livio. As the discussion reached a stalemate, Joe didn't give at all, Ernest attempted to rephrase his motion—but of course keep its content. When Joe didn't budge chairman Charlier was astute enough eventually break the deadlock by adjourning the meeting. Pierre backed off too.

The discussion of course was very high level. I could only gather that (in reference to the Brazilian article) if we do not deal with a country over a period of 6 or 9 months, the article first to overcome our silence must state our position on some rather ABC matters—such as we are opposed to the police regime and their torturing of opposition currents. Both Ernest and Pierre tried to make out that the Brazil article was nothing but a straight attack on militants who are trying in their own way to fight the regime. They insisted on ~~claiming~~ ^{claiming} that the Urugayan group was not trying to participate on an independent basis in the broad discussions of the left on the problem of building a political opposition to the regime but actually was participating in a popular front sell-out. I ~~adapted~~ ^{adapted} to point out how their reactions were extremely factional, and talking about real differences of some importance referred to the bureau discussion I initiated on our attitude to the European farm question. When I said that it involved the application of our transitional program there were expressions of indignation however Ernest did not deny this—he said that the transitional demands sketched into the 1938 document on the workers and farmers alliance did not apply to Europe 1971.

oh yes--the Domingo letter. The motion that I made that it be circulated in the United Secretariat passed as you will see from the minutes. Livio remained firm on his position that it was just a personal letter that he sent to a comrade. He knew nothing about the Uruguayan Committee head on it--in fact nothing about its circulation which was entirely the responsibility of the person who received it--without his authorization. Ernest-Pierre--said that they knew nothing about this letter--and from what I know of Livio I see no reason to question their word. Of course this matter could not go anywhere, even if we had wanted it to, without copies being available. The next move is yours.

A few other small observations. Earlier ~~in a~~ ^{following} report of the East European commission by Sandor dealing with our many language publications Pia asked for copies of the Polish bulletin. Apparently there are many Polish workers in Switzerland. Sandor embarrassedly said that there had only been one issue ever come out and that there had been many complaints about it--I gather ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} about the quality of its appearance. Ernest came in behind Pat's report on the British situation to counteract the factual report I gave of his last U.S. report on the "bad" situation there. In passing Pat revealed that we are not carrying any effective work on that revolutionary struggle so close to home--Ireland. It seems that the Irish we are working with are quite demoralized. The reports on April 24 were marked by astonishing inattentiveness of the meeting--Livio walking around--Ernest making phone calls. It is obvious that the French Committee contains no ~~forces~~ ^{forces} outside of our own and if the British action amounts to much it won't be our fault. Livio expressed considerable irritation that ~~the~~ international press did not cover the Turin conference on a big scale. Sandor reported on the discussion of the conference at the IC national committee--I would gather. They thought that there was some interesting information exchanged at the conference but there was really no profitable analysis; that there were possibly some differences in ~~the~~ concepts of work between the French and the Italian; and that the French did not know what the strategy of the Italians on the trade union arena was, if they had one. This was not developed at all. I will have to try to pursue this when I go to Paris next. Despite the fact that I had only two weeks before challenged the attendance figures ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ Livio's report ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ La Gauche, Livio asked me again to say a few words on what I thought of the affair. The way Ernest talks one would gather that there may be some differences in drawing up the program for the next IEC meeting and world congress--if there are any he stressed that he is for dropping the project. Oh, yes, I had overlooked the fact that while the new forces that have come to the German group have just gone through an split experience with the IKD there was no balance sheet of this experience at their congress. Gisela in her report was ecstatic over the fact that no one said anything about the IKD and therefore it was a non-issue. Vergeat also expressed pleasure. In my report I mentioned that I had learned from David that the SDs and ~~SPs~~ ^{SPs} had undergone considerable growth in their youth movement. Ernest challenged the SP aspect--but really only to backhandedly affirm it--and then ~~he~~ ^{he} disabused Vergeat and Gisela about their happy frame of mind re the IKD. It appears that not only is it still around but has grown and has good elements ^{also} according to Ernest ~~and~~ ^{and} should be with us--he mentioned Brandt's son. Ernest in his report of the Swedish weekend he addressed, said that there were 60 comrades in the group--problems though--the two key leaders are fed up, and they are holding off membership to the guy who made the main arrangements for the last WC and is the big publisher of LT's works. I told them that I will be in all probability going to Sweden and Denmark. They expressed pleasure. The day was saved by Gisela's report that Canada has sent in \$140 to the Bengal campaign and is contributing \$40 a month. That's it.

comradely
Ross

April 26, 1971

Roger Barnes
Australia

Dear Roger;

- I assume that you have been getting Labor Challenge over the past period and know that I am still around, along with a core of other comrades who you knew when you were in Canada. I happen to be in Europe right now getting around to the congresses of the various sections and trying to do some writing. Last month I was in Turin at a conference on trade unionism organized by the European sections of the Fourth International --and I happened to meet a Mary Johnson

Mary is very active in the Turin branch of the Italian section. I know no Italian and she was so good as to translate for me. Of course she told me that she came to our movement through the Australian Trotskyists--specifically through the Gould group and she told me about you.

I gather from her that you are very actively associated with the Percy brothers and the Socialist Youth Alliance. In fact she told me that you operate the printing business that puts out Direct Action. That all sounds good to me because Direct Action strikes me as one of the best Trotskyist papers-- and it is coming out in a country where there are obvious tremendous opportunities to build an effective Trotskyist party.

As I can see from Direct Action you are very busy with little time for correspondence but it would be very good to get a few words from you. With the new wave of radicalization Australia has blossomed out with a great many who consider themselves Trotskyists. How is it all sorting out now in your opinion? Where is Gould going and what does he have around around himself. Do you know a John McCarthy in Brisbane and a Phil Sanford in Sydney? I happened to see a clipping of the anti-war conference that was addressed by Bala Tampo ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ In the report on the vote it mentioned two Trotskyist groups--one getting 299 votes, the other getting 54 votes. What were the differences expressed and the groups holding them

Have you met Keith Locke of New Zealand. I see Sol Salby who write for Direct Action was over there a while back. As possibly you have heard Keith came to the movement through our Edmonton branch. But before his return we had him come into Toronto to finish his school terms and stay over a while as acting Toronto organizer where I got to know him.

Incidentally there is a young women comrade in the country there who if she hasn't already dropped around will do so. Her name is ~~Marlene~~ Marlie Ritchie. She played a very prominent role in women's liberation in Toronto for a period. She went to Australia when a male friend of hers got a job transfer.

1261 '92 114dy

Of course the situation is quite transformed in Canada since you left ---how many years ago. We never see the Raisons or the Snobels but we retained a good core from those years and the new influx of youth --particularly women--has transformed us. We have a real pan-Canadian operation now.....having managed to fill in all the important gaps between Toronto and Vancouver. This Spring we even set up a Prairie at large organizer. And of course the big break through is our Quebec operation. It was composed of colonized comrades for a long time--some of who are completely bi-lingual--but we are now recruiting genuine Quebecois and last month so structured the organization as to set up a Quebecnational committee, composed entirely on Quebecois.

I hope you get our youth paper-Young Socialist. By this fall we anticipate we will have doubled its membership. Last word is that we have won many posts in the student administrative bodies across the country. The Simon Frazer presidency of the Student Administrative Council is very significant but only three years ago the cops and the administration smashed an action of a generally ultra-leftists character, purged a couple of faculties

Hugh is very active in what was part of Dehavilland but is now Douglas Aircraft. He had a heart attack while attending one of our big Quebec solidarity meetings but seems to have recovered. He and Claire have four children who have been writing me notes to bring some stamps back with me.

Are you getting the International Discussion Bulletins OK. There is an important new one in which Joe Hansen replies to Maitain, Mandel and Martine. I assume you comrades are preparing to send someone for the coming congress.

It is quite probable that I will be leaving Europe shortly after the congress of the Ligue Communiste--the end of May although I would like to stay over for the IMG congress over June 19-20. I would appreciate hearing from you before I leave. I can be reached at

Ross Dowson c/o Sheppard
225 Ave. Paul Deschanel 2 etage
Bruxelles 1030 Belgium

comradely

Ross

Manon Lager, Mtl

April 27, 1971

Harvey SLP
Shoppard? SLP

Dear Joe and Barry;

After we left you Joe at the airport, Manon and I went down to the Gare du Nord to check out the trains to Zurich and send George I wire as to when she would arrive. We found a train was going through in ten minutes so Manon hopped right on. She is due back on the 6th from Lausanne—if she get here in time we will both go out to Ghent to see the comrades there and also hear Ernet at the university there. With you both went the good weather. According to the Times we are right now suffering the coldest late April weather in history—not so bad as it might sound eh'. for the next line says that history starts at 1940 for the London weather center. I woke up last night and had to put another blanket on.

I went to ~~La Gauche~~ Tariq's meeting that evening. An interesting little experience. It got a big billing in April 23 La Gauche—half of page 3. I met Tariq and Vergeat at the office at 7 to go out to the ~~meeting hall~~ hall with them. Apparently it was all settled that a couple of the comrades would come down and pick us up. When no one showed by 7:45 we took a taxi. Meeting was billed to start at 8. We arrived at about 8:10 and there were about 10 people. Tariq brought over some new stuff they have run off their press so I scrounged the office of other English language material which I took out with me and set up a literature stand. I figured that it might attract some English reading people. I priced everything at 10 BF. ..and sold 20 peices of literature. That was all the literature sold t ere aside from a few copies of La Gauche which were peddled. The two fellows who were operating the bookstore were there but they brought no literature with them. Vergeat all this time was extremely cranky about the Belgians--failure to pick us up, no literature, lateness of meeting, size of the hall(would probably hold about 500 plus a balcony. The meeting finally got underway by 8:45 and by about 9:20 there were about 90 to 100 in attendance. The few comrades that I have seen in Bruxelles were there and they brought comrades in from both Ghent and Louvain. It was a pretty boring meeting--I had one hell of a time keeping awake. I find Tariq quite an unintersting speaker and of course he was further deadened by having to be translated --although he had the top flite aid of Charlier. All his usual open ended formulations--comrade Mao--of course he exposed the Chinese regime's support of Pakistan but in a very English Oxford style. Suprisingly tere were a couple of Maoists in the audience whochallenged Tariq in the discussion period--of course he took them on. None of the Belgians offered to take the literature stand so I handled it both before and after the meeting. Through it I got to have a big of a discussion with a fellow who spoke excellent English--he struck me as quite interested in our ideas but but not really acquainted with them. I tried to turn him over to Vergeat who didn't seem interested in following him up. After the meeting he came up to the table and ~~asked me~~ told me he had a car and would drive me home if I wanted. I had earlier asked Ernest if he would give me a lift but Gisela was not there--so I had the fellow drive us all home. I turns out that this fellow(about 20 yrs old) is the son of a Belgian diplomat learned English when his old man was posted in Burma I think it was and had lived in Peru and eslewhere. Hates Bruxelles. Ernest is immediately on the defensive to mine and Tariq's amusement. It turns out that this goddam town is really racist. He said that in lots of apartments and restaurants there are actually signs saying they dont want the patronage of foreigners. I told him he should pull some of this ~~information~~ together and take it to the JGS who I am sure would like to do something about it. The guy doesn't know anything about our ideas so we start

suggest some reading material that he can pick up at the bookstore. It was astonishing to hear what Ernest was suggesting to him--Revolution Betrayed etc etc. I started to suggest and then I realized that actually that is of a good introductory character to our ideas. As Nanon noted--not a thing on women's liberation. ...tning comparable to the trial pamphlets, Peter's speeches, George's writings. After we dumped Tariq and Ernest I took him around and gave him a couple of duplicate copies we have here of the ISR.

When we came to leave the hdters to go to the meeting Tariq picks up the several bags he brought. I expressed some surprise that he wasn't using the facilities there and suggested that he come up and stay with me. Oh he said he was going to stay at one of the comrades. It turns out he stays at Ernest's. They all thought I was going to Britain for the weekend. When I turn up at the office on Friday and tell Vergast I am not--he tells me that the bureau meeting has been changed from Wednesday to Tuesday--I would certainly have missed it if I had gone to England. At the bureau meeting Giseal informs us about the lecture she gave in London and about the demo on the 24th there. She thought I was going to London--way wouldn't she have offered to go along with me. All very strange.

Well I did not go to London--for one thing one of the parcels of books came in and I must do some of the work that I promised the Canadians I would do when over here--after all that was part of the deal. And as you know with all the meetings here I have hardly done anything at all on this. I've got about one week that's clear ahead of me.

Today was the bureau meeting. Jean Pierre came in with Pierre so there was six of us--but it wasn't the more valuable for that. First off a bit of a round up of April 24. The U.S. -Ernest knows all about it from the Herald Tribune. Frisco a big success because of the unions--~~Washington~~ Washington--no unions, smaller than November. They are watching every move of the Vietnamese. It appears that they have announced some good moves as to how they will employ their forces against US forces in order to dispose anti-war sentiment amongst them. Ernest speculates about possibly moves the Chinese may make to work out a settlement --he is utterly convinced that the Vietnamese won't compromise--they have been "welded to the gun". Giseal I gather wasn't actually on the London march but she says there were 2,000--apparently the IS came in as individuals. In Paris there were 3,000 which they seemed to think was quite good as there was no meeting to arrange it for some reason until the Monday of that week. Here or under Ceylon somehow the latest issue of the Militant came up. Vergast made a jab about how at last you had tanked up Tariq's book. Not true I said you had already commented on it in the ISR I think. But with comments like this--and the Mike Mill report you positively feel that you are sitting on top of a cess pool of cafe gossip and grievances. We are certainly paying a price here in Europe for the lack of continuity of cadre. So I didn't say anything about Bala Tampo when Ernest commented that the past few weeks has caused him to change his judgement of Bala as a politician in a positive way--the only mistake he having made ~~hshgving~~ giving ground to Australia. I didn't say anything about a leader who doesn't have anything under him when others can develop a mass movement such as the JVP appears to be--who isn't hardly aware of its existence until the government commences to attack it as a threat to its authority. All I did was to suggest that we may not be heading for a showdown in Ceylon with the CMU etc., that such a policy would smash Mrs B's very useful coalition--that the economic crisis in Ceylon itself is a very small matter for the powerful list of allies she now has to solve and keep Ceylon as a stable basis for operations against any threats that may well develop in India. Vergast had some talks with Le Monde and they let him look over the wire service material. It seems that a slew of papers have been officially banned. One PROTEST V. thought was ours but I said it was Healy's. There was no mention of a ban on our press.

series of bits and snatches---It appears that we have come across an article from the Czech press that attempts to make an assessment of the 4th--from seeing it at the Bruxelles assembly and the Pentonville operation. The Spanish are widening out and held a street demo of some 300 in Barcelona--report in one of the French papers--they seek financial aid so there is going to be a very limited appeal directed primarily to Spaniards in European countries. Of course we are turning up some Bengali in England. Gisela gave a eulogistic report of development of the IMG. Big discussion about how V should go about preparing the Arab document for the IEC--obviously Ernest is worried that it won't be ready in time. Luxemburg comrades heavily involved in a high school students struggle---and so it went.

While V mentioned the Paris book review nothing was said about Pat's item on kidnapping in the same issue. Good to see the coverage on the French women's protest--and interesting to see how Rouge dealt with the question without actually mentioning that inspiring protest. I hear that you are sending a whole gang over for the Commune and LC congress. I have more or less committed Manon to France from May 15th on and I see now I will have to ask the Belgians to move the meeting they propose to arrange for her at Rue d'Espagne back around the 3rd or 4th of May so she can go over to England for several days. She has to leave right after the LC congress. Ernest raised the question of her speaking in England--I told him I speak much better English and while I may not sense the nuances as qualified as her to speak on Quebec if that is what they want--You know I have offered to speak in England on both recent occasions but never have I been taken up. I had a discussion on the general situation in Britain on the way back and to the restaurant. The several discussions that I have had with him are quite astonishing--first they are arguments quite tense--and he rapidly sinks to a very low level of cheap debating tricks. Truly astonishing when you consider the calibre of many of his writings. As a politician it strikes me that Livio runs circles around him--as a politician even on the small scale. And a real one man band. As you know they are projecting a four day school right before the IEC meeting. So he raises the matter of the SA speaking tour and its dates. . .and what it may do to the school and the IEC. Do you know the school pivots entirely around him--I can only gather from what he said that this 4 day session as the Swedish one several weeks ago is all him and no one else. Oh yes the commune affair. Paris estimates 10,000. LC is coming in behind it but not mobilizing its outside Paris supporters. Of course all Europe will come but they don't seem to be organizing it much--big hassle between E and G whether Belgium is arranging a couple of busses or not--G says no. England estimates only 100--apparently the cost is higher than the Bruxelles project. They have arranged for bed-roll space for 3 to 4,000. Haven't got the LC documents yet but V assured me that they will be coming in the mail to 225 anyday now. Send sample copies of any Red Power material you have--this person appears to be a specialist in the field.

Waltraud Wagner, 4351 Hornburg

~~West Germany~~

I think it would be good to arrange a big Pathfinder display for the Commune and the LC congress. I doubt that Pathfinder should sell--Red Books would hardly muffle that ball---but a big display of Pathfinder and the Militant and ISR would be good in my opinion.

Alan phoned--they had a good holiday. I told them that all the Br documents were out. I managed to read them all thoroughly over the weekend so we can have a useful discussion when Manon and I go over. Mill attended the IMG NC meeting according to the minutes Al received. According to Gisela the Liason Committee (trade union) that I was talking about attending if I went to London was so tightly controlled by the CP that our comrades were unable to play any role whatsoever.

next is another bureau meeting then the JGS conference here.

comradely Ross

May 4, 1971

George Rosie
c/o Panther Books
London, England

Dear Sir;

I happened to come across your book-The British in Vietnam--
How the twenty-five year war began - by accident several weeks ago.
I found it extremely interesting and immediately wrote a review of it
which has just been published by a weekly that specializes in political
analysis--Intercontinental Press, published in New York.

as I have only one for my file
I am sending you a photo copy of the review. Sorry that I cannot
send you the full copy. If you will write to Intercontinental Press
P.O. Box 116 Village Post Office Station, New York N.Y. 10014, I am
sure they will be pleased to forward you a copy.

In one portion of your book you mention the popular revolutionary
socialist leader Ta Tu Thau. ~~It is only in passing as it~~
was incidental to your book. Ta Tu Thau is a little recorded figure
in this very crucial turning point in the history of Vietnam and has
become of particular interest to me.

I am wondering if in your research for your book you did not come
across more material on him. I would ~~very~~ ^{much} appreciate ~~any~~ information
that you could give me on him---if not direct from your own files--
just where I could obtain further information that you became aware of
in your research.

*perhaps you have a record in your research material
or in the process of your research there across material that you could
tell me where I could
find it*
I happen to be visiting Europe at this time but expect to be in
England withing about a week. I would appreciate hearing from you.
I will be picking up mail at Leader Books, 28 Poland Street, London.

Any help that you could give me would be very much appreciated

sincerely

Ross Dowson

(Undated handwritten notes by RD found in 1971)

What WW II was all about

(book review – on “*The British in Vietnam*,” by George Rosie)

Not what those who were fighting and dying in it thought but those who had the positions of power who made all the decisions in the framework imposed.

While it is Wall Street and Washington that is providing the planes and guns and deploying the forces that are attempting to crush the forces for Vietnamese independence and self-rule. With Australian and New Zealand forces, the U.S. is only carrying on where the French and the British and the Japanese before them left off.

The people of what we know as Vietnam have been in one continuous struggle for now over one hundred years against imperialist intervention. This small paperback of some 144 pages illustrates the British chapter in that tale of infamy. But as (author) Rosie shows, British forces played an absolutely crucial role. But for British intervention in the critical period of September 1945 as the French had gone under and the Japanese had suffered the catastrophe of the atom bombings and were withdrawing, until March 1946 when the French were able to re-establish their murderous rule, the Vietnamese would have re-established the power that was already in their hands.

The British moved in when no other imperialist power was able to do so, smashed the Vietminh government in Saigon, released the pro-Vichy French murder squads from prison and instead of clearing out the enemy Japanese forces, ostensibly the reason for (the British) being there, with their presence enlisted them in a murderous assault against the Vietnamese which re-established the old French overlords in power once again.

This sordid tale is related by an author who is himself incredulous of his own findings. In his concluding chapter the author asks not only the reader but himself a whole series of questions about the facts that he previously related.

Among them: why were Churchill and Eden so anxious to restore Indochina to the French after the war? Was the decision taken by the Big Powers at Potsdam to incorporate half of Vietnam into a British command purely a military one or were the motives of the British Joint Chiefs of Staff covertly political? Why did Mountbatten, head of the S.E. Asia Command, who he characterizes as a liberal, not have more influence over events in South Vietnam? Was he double-crossed by the French and by association the British general in command of Vietnam, General Gracey? Did Gracey exceed his orders when upon arrival he suppressed the Vietnamese press and declared martial law? Was the decision to carry out the coup that smashed the Vietminh government of Saigon his own or was he pressured into it by the French? Was the use of the Japanese in the subsequent fighting wise or ethical, etc, etc.?

But facts are stubborn things and Rosie has searched them out and authenticated them from the Ministry of Defence Library, the Library of the Royal Institute of International Affairs

and the Institute of Strategic Studies, from the journals and records of the regiments employed, largely India and Gurkha forces from the Burma campaign. Among his photographs from the Imperial War Museum is one showing a Japanese trooper with whom Gracey's forces had just been locked in a life and death battle, actually posting the British Declaration of Martial Law on the streets of Saigon on September 19, 1945.

The author relates how with the collapse of Japan engulfed by the A-Bomb, the nationalist forces moved out to establish their power in Saigon under the United National Front that had been set up by the Japanese. The Vietminh which had fought the Japanese established its leadership with the agreement of other nationalist forces who feared that the British and French would dismiss the movement out of hand as a creature of Japanese intrigue. The Peoples' Committee for the South was established in Saigon Town Hall under the chairmanship of Tran Van Giau, leader of the Cochinchina Communist Party. Ho Chi Minh was head of the Tonkin Communist Party with the North part of Annam constituting North Vietnam. The Committee consisted of 9 members – 6 of whom were Communists.

Rosie shows how the Vietminh bent over backwards to curry the favour of the British and the French. The extremely conciliatory policy of the Vietminh to Cédille, the Commissioner-Designate for Cochinchina who the RAF had flown in August 22, caused all the other nationalist forces including the Trotskyists to express fears of a sell-out to the French.

Following the September 2 day of the Declaration of Independence in the process of which there was a riot and some shootings and pillages of French houses, the Vietminh took a whole series of actions to assuage the fears of the British, whose arrival they were awaiting. Among them was the arrest of the leaders of the Trotskyists and Tran Van Giau himself stepping down and reconstituting the Committee to 13 – only 4 of them Communists.

The Vietminh welcomed the British. But says Rosie "the extremists among the nationalists had succeeded, to the dismay of the Vietminh, in stirring up some feelings against the British by spreading a rumour that Gracey had come simply to re-install the French" (page 52).

Gracey apparently refused to have any dealings with the Vietminh who daily went to the British Commission begging for direct negotiations with him – pointing out that while the French had openly collaborated with the Japanese they had been in active opposition, and offering their assistance in disarming the Japanese. In vain.

On September 21 the British declared martial law – rearmed many of the Saigon colons, took over the jail, rearmed the French POWs (*Prisoners of war*) who had been in there since the Japanese ended their collaboration with the French early that March. Then Cédille with these forces and British permission, on September 23 seized the Vietminh HQ in the town hall... and arrested all the committee members they could find.

The terror was on. Ho Chi Minh protested from Hanoi that "the release of the French POWs... and (the arrest of the Committee)... (*was*) a non-fulfilment of the mission placed on the commander of British forces in South Indo-China by the UN... and a non-observation of neutrality by the British disarmament forces..."

Japanese troops who had been disarmed were now armed by the British (page 65). The author Rosie protests that he thinks the coup was a tragic blunder: "the foreboding and warnings of the most extreme nationalists seem to have been justified. As a consequence, the moderately inclined Vietminh were pushed into the same camp as such hard-liners as the Trotskyists..."

Mountbatten, alarmed by the developing situation called Gracey and Cédille to Singapore where they reassured him that they had in fact been trying to get the nationalists to the conference table for 3 days. Such a meeting took place but the French were prepared to concede nothing. “Meanwhile the Vietminh was being forced to adopt a militant posture by pressure from the extremist groups. There was no real ground left for compromise.”

“While the Vietminh probably did their best to ensure that it (the truce) was kept, their hold on the nationalist forces had loosened ever since the coup of September 23. It was the extremists, not the Vietminh, who had proven (to be) right about the intentions of the British; the Vietminh policy of moderation resulting only in the restoration of French rule in Saigon.” (p.72)

From then, mid-October (1946), until the British withdrew their forces, the bulk of them to Indonesia to do there for the Dutch what they did for the French in Vietnam in early (1945) – Rosie says: “the war became a smaller version of the kind that the US is still fighting.”

With the British conducting themselves in no way different from the most hardened element in the Green Berets: “The British units were directed not to be too scrupulous in attempting to distinguish between harmless civilians and Vietnamese combatants. It is therefore perfectly legitimate,” a British commander continued to direct, “to look upon **all** locals anywhere near where a shot has been fired as enemies, and treacherous ones at that, and treat them accordingly.”

The British boasted of the use of Japanese troops in the same way as Southern senators boast about using Vietnamese not Americans. The Official History of the Indian Armed Forces notes that “all the dirty work to fight and disarm the Annamites (Vietnamese) was assigned to Japanese troops.”

The historian of “4/10 Ghurkas” noted “a satisfactory result of their use was greatly to reduce the casualties among our own troops” – Japanese casualties were more than British, Indian and French combined.

This carefully documented paperback besides opening up a little-known chapter on the struggle of the Vietnamese people, on this occasion against British imperialism, inadvertently throws considerable light on the nature of the 2nd World War. For the British occupation of Vietnam at the same time as it opened up the period of the national liberation struggle of the colonial peoples, it was a closing chapter in the 2nd World War.

The author clearly reveals that the primary consideration of Churchill was the supremacy of British capital and the security of the British Empire. If somewhat confused by Roosevelt’s talk about the UN trusteeship system – none the less it brings our attention to a statement of Churchill’s chief advisor and subsequent Prime Minister (*Anthony Eden? –ed.*) : “Roosevelt’s dislike of colonialism,” while “it was a principle with him, was not the less cherished for its possible advantages.”

In a separate chapter ... Rosie deals with the situation in the North, assigned by the Big Three at Posdam as it was assigned to the British (and) to Chiang (Kai Shek?), whose forces poured in along with a group of American aides. (*He also deals with the*) pusillanimous policies of the Vietminh there under Ho Chi Minh who on March 6 signed an agreement with the French realigning the Republic of Vietnam as part of the French Union, while (remaining) a ‘free state’.”

One of the provisions was that the Vietnamese army was always to be outnumbered by the French.

The leaders of the Trotskyists including Ta Tu Thau were murdered. Daniel Guerin, prominent French anti-colonialist met Ho in summer of 1946 and asked Ho about this. Ho replied “He was a great patriot and we mourn him” but added in a steady voice “all those who do not follow the line which I have laid down will be broken...” – au services des (*colonisateurs*).

The facts as presented by Rosie themselves answer his questions.

(Ed: see also file “March 99” – notes of a meeting of Peng with Ho Chi Minh)

(SEE ALSO: “The Perfidious Role of the British in Indochina” from Intercontinental Press, /SWP, New York, May3, 1971.)

May 4, 1971

Joe and Barry

Enclosed is a report from the Times on developments in Bolivia. As soon as I came across it in the Times I bought several other papers but there was nothing--then this morning before the bureau meeting I picked up Le Monde (the previous issue was the combined Sunday-Monday issue) but there was nothing....they are still reporting Friday's news. I showed the clipping to Ernest. It was all news to him. He tended to dismiss the report with some comments to the effect that this would be something quite new--soviets from the top. Pierre said nothing. I brought it up again under the reports on May Day actions. Ernest made a crack about the students calling for arms for the people. I said yes that is exactly what is necessary--the people armed and not a little squad substituting for the people. Pierre said not to discount small armed groups. Then I raised the matter of contacting the Bolivians at once. Ernest reported that he wrote them over ten days ago and had heard nothing from them--something must be done about our connections, he murmured. What about the Latin American press, I said. Well we end up--Pierre is going to get one of the LA bureau comrades to immediately go through the LA press that comes into Paris airmail. When it comes to the agenda I suggested that we should put Bolivia on. Ernest agreed--for the next U.S.

I was all fired up that we should send someone over right away. But then what have we got here. Besides you often don't see what you're not looking for--particularly what you're looking not to see.

First item was April 24. Well aside from America not too much came off. Besides that don't have a feed of information from the comrades--a systematic one. They know what happened in Copenhagen a week ago from the report in Le Monde. So you have the US Press and Washington, Canada--2,000 plus in Toronto (rained), 1,500 Vancouver, 1,500 in Montreal--this is the first in 5 years or so, the NDP convention coming out in Ottawa. Marion was in the Rome demo--it was a modest one--what struck her were the ultra left slogans--down with socialist imperialism. The French one I told you about. The question came up of our maintaining writing up a report. Ernest said we have been mailing out a great deal of material lately--besides the comrades have all the material in Intercontinental. Then he suggested that maybe I would like to pull together the material. Well I am not as there is really nothing to work on--the Copenhagen demo was quite large I see from Le Monde but the circumstances??

Nothing much was said--but even though there were only four of us I felt that it was necessary to say something about the significant contribution of the SWP-US in the building of this unprecedented anti-war movement. If the reception had been warmer I think I would have suggested that the bureau or secretariat in some way make known its relation to the comrades over there. You know the more I sit around over here the more I become convinced that the radicalization that is taking place on the North American continent is much more profound than anywhere ~~in Europe~~ in Europe barring possibly Britain and Spain--So I made a few comments about this tremendous ferment, the possibilities it has for us and your effective work in it--mentioned the black movement, women's liberation, the gay movement. This got some snickers and shoulder shrugs. It is all really laughable when you see how what excitement they get something that takes place in Luxembourg. With our differences these comrades seem to have lost their sense of proportion--their judgement.

There was a short discussion on this point on the direction of the Vietnam war. It would seem to me that the pressure is building up for the Vietnamese to make a deal. Ernest and Pierre express an idealist, a desperate belief that the Vietnamese will not submit to Soviet and now Chinese pressures. I mentioned Vietnamese ~~independence~~ independence on Chinese

matériel. Pierre shuffed with Ernest correcting him
We are getting some breaks over Bengla desh...of course so is Healy I see
in England. An important person has come out of the area to get aid.
Pariq is over to see him here.

Ceylon. They havent heard from you with regards to our making a
statement on the LSSP renegades. You will recall I and Pierre were for one
with Ernest hesitant and his tossing the ball to you. Pierre came with
a further idea--that one of us should go there to investigate the criminal
role of the govt and its LSSP supporters. I think this is a very good idea.
A very fine report came in from Bala. Pierre is going to go through it
and extract the material that we can publish. I think the statement by the
leadership of the CMU is very good...with Bala very much in the public eye.
The JVP struggle found very little response in the workers movement.
You will probably have this material by the time you get this note.
Fred Brode of Houston dropped in--I got up early this morning to get
this off before going to see him but he also got up early and called on
me so I won't be able to get this off until the 6th.

May Day. I gather the report is fairly accurate in Le Monde of
the French action. The Lambert group held a meeting in Paris attended by
about 1,500. I saw the CP demo here in Brussels. Hard to say--mabe about
3,000 to 4,000 right down into the centre square. It was predominantly
composed of Greek, Spanish and Moroccan workers. The Belgian comrades were
not even selling their paper to the considerable crowd that gathered along
the main drag ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~--the weather was pleasant. The Commune project
is going forward. So likewise the LC congress in Paris. Both Gisela and
I had it wrong so probably you have too. The congress spans over three
days May 29--30- 31. I did not have it down in my book for the Saturday.
I havent received any of the documents despite Vergent's continual assur-
ances that they are sending them through to the address up here on
Deschanel. Did you get the new headquarters address

10 Impasse Guemenee Paris IV phone 2726832 27228896
For some reason a little bit of a scandal came up. Maspero has recently
publish a pretty crude, rotten anti-Trotskyist book--hardly to be justified
by the argument that he is in the publishing business. Also in passing it
it seems that Grant in Britain is about to come out with a weekly. It was
strange to hear Ernest talk about the growth of the Trotskyist press in
England, the growth encompassing an estimation of the press run of
Healy, IS, Grant along with the Mole. I suppose one can say that any and
all the other papers are as much Trotskyist as the Mole is. But where as
I saw this as a condemnation of our weaknesses the failures of our movement
he saw it as a general increase of receptivity to "Trotskyism" and went on
to talk about the circulation of Trotsky's pre-Bolshevik paper in contrast
to Lenin's and the multiplicity of other Russian papers--Lenin couldn't
help that...we cant help this .. Strange to hear this--in the inner circle
isn't it.

Glad to see that you published my review of the book on Britain in
Vietnam. I have written to the author to see if he ~~has~~ came across other
material in his research on Ta Tu Thau. How come you published that piece
of crap on Britain in advance of it having even appeared in the Mole.
It seems to me to be an article that is quite out of place in ICP..very
specialized, tactical...furthermore while I would like to take it on--
could ICP publish me. The whole idea of action committees is sucked out of
Singh's thumb, unvalled for attack on the workers control movement etc etc
Incidentally for any of the comrades who might like to know a Maspero
book written by Lacheraf is in Pierre's opinion the most important general
book on Algeria. The rest of my books arrived from England. The David McL
Allan book-Marx's Grundrisse published by MACMILLAN is an important book.
Allan should send you a pile--but the paperback edition

It was a relaxed and somewhat casual meeting. E and G are taking their holiday in June--hope to be back for the U.S. meeting on the 26th. Did you know that Pablo, with his little printing adventure hoped to bring the French financial structure down in ruins. Laughable eh. o there is nothing in June but the IMG

Havent seen the document on Latin America yet. known and I will be going over to England right after the JGC conference this weekend. Ernest was very concerned that I would miss the bureau meeting--I cant see ~~xxxx~~ coming back for it on the 12th--and intend to go from England directly over to Paris. So there will be nobody here except known who is speaking in Brussels on the 13th and then going onto Paris.

A real shake up in personell is taking place in the north over there. They are agreeable to my staying over for the IMG conference--but I must say I am somewhat uneasy.---because of the shakeup. Riddell will be gone to Montreal by the time you receive this. Steele will be organizer in Toronto--dumping executive secretary. Young wont be moving into the center until mid May. I posed the question of ICP as a reserve in case there is a feeling of uneasiness about the adjustments and low and behold I see it has been posed to Dick P who is really interested. As attractive as this Dick proposition may appear to you and us all--there is no question in my mind that it cannot be--at this time. With John gone. my not being there and Dick probably moving--there is just no paper operation. They are toying with the idea of two totall y new comrades moving in there

I was really pleased to hear how things had been working out but now the whole thing strikes me as a bit of a fantasy.

I just received the letter from John S on this this afternoon and will have to think this over--and let you know

comradely

Ross

May 11 1971

London

Hansen SWP
Sheppard SWP
Dear Joe and Barry;

Alain Krivine, LCR
Ms. Manon Leges, MFL

Manon and I came in from Brussels late yesterday fresh from the JCS conference in Ghent, held over Saturday and Sunday. Fresh ??? It was a long conference, stretching about 3 hours past what they had planned into Sunday nite.

After the Lausanne experience and her Rome experience Manon was pleased with the freindly reception we got. As you know when we went to see Ernest and told him about Manon making a big of a jaunt around Europe and her readiness to speak to branch meetings or at public meetings they might like to arrange and her competence as a Quebecois in French things were very quicky arranged with the Lausanne Switzerland comrades and with Livio in Rome.

Well nothing was arranged by Livio at Rome at all for Manon. Livio dropped doll down to see her—passed a few freindly words and that was that. Manon felt she was quite coldly or at the best indifferently received. They didn't even offer to put her up, to show her the town at all. So she went off on her own. After a couple of days in Rome she turned up in Brussels. The next day she decided to head out again but before doing so we decided she should phone the Lausanne comrades and see whatb and when they had arranged something. We found that despite Ernest's call they were not going to arrange anything. So Manon said she would be prepared to talk to a branch meeting or even just a few comrades. So they agreed that she should arrive in on an evening the next week. When she got there nothing had been arranged at all but she did manage to have a ~~friendly~~ discussion with several comrades at the headquarters. All in all she was quite disappointed with the whole experience and this was making the French proposition quite unattractive to her.

I am not so sure how it looks to her right now after our meeting with Alain at Ghent. He was very warm but when I asked him about the arrangements with Manon he expressed suprise—he said that he had no idea when she was coming,.... But you know I very patiently told Sandor her exact schedule re France and her availability and desire to make a tour of the major French branches. A little uneasiness caused me to go through the whole thing with Vergeat a few days later when he was off to Paris. But on Saturday Alain did not know what her schedule was etc. So we told him. Manon is arriving in Paris for the Commune celebrations—so we will see what the score is. My impression is that this information just doesn't get through the labyrinth of their operations.

But the comrades in Ghent were quite friendly, attentive. As soon as we arrived a comrade who I had met in Turin came to us and told me that he had been assigned to help us in anyway possible. They wanted to give us the lodgning and meal tickets which every11 one else was paying five bucks for but we thanked them very much but insisted that we should pay our expenses. We stayed with the out of town comrades—about 100 at a youth hostel and eat with them at a special arrangement they had made—we took bedrolls Eric and Emile on several occasions asked if everything was ok—our aid made sure we got copies of documents that they had run out of—and all in all the situation was a very comradely one. The comrade who came over from Belgium for the YS-YSA conventions said that they would like one of us to say a few words to the congress at the opening of the Sunday afternoon session. Manon gave a good short address which was followed attentively and well received. A couple of comrades approached us at the end of the sessions and insisted in driving us back to Brussels and right up to the apartment. We took them into the local pub for beer and sandwiches and had a good discussion on many matters. Manon gave the some copies of our Quebec paper and copies of our resolution on the womens liberat on struggle adopted at the last congress (Fresh version) They were happy to put them on the literature stand which was a fiarly good one—giving a good play of

But bang-off, the tendency objected that there was not going to be an election of a new leadership. Of course the incumbents had a very good argument—we are only two weeks away from the fusion which will elect a new leadership. All I can gather since the comrades ~~gathering~~ at this Ghent conference will be the majority of the delegates at the fusion that their real purpose was to start here and now the leadership struggle. Of course the conference accepted the proposition of no election. The tendency ended up on their hardest position with seven votes.—with a member of the IEC Charlier quite a sophisticated guy one of its spokesmen.

Emile's report projected more of the same thing—a general ouvrierist line. I think I told you that at Turin it struck me that this was the general line of both the Belgian and Swiss groups. It is a line of students-to-the workers, students standing outside plant gates distributing leaflets telling the workers inside what the tasks of the class struggle in this and that shop actually are. We don't have the impression that this ouvrierism is carried in Belgium in quite as a hysterical way as in Switzerland. They are conducting student-youth work but it isn't treated with any real concept of that the student-youth milieu is an arena of mass action, that can project broad objectives of its own. It is treated only as another area of recruitment to the party. They also project the idea that they are no longer a propaganda group but are now a combat operation, capable of playing a leading role on the broad plane of the class struggle in Belgium.

The tendency in a somewhat confused way gives the impression that it more sensitive to the student struggles. The tendency also tends to scoff at the majorities pretensions that they are leading a combat operation. There was some laughter when the leadership talked of their implantation of forces in the factories.

The JGS hasn't been functioning as a youth group for sometime in all probability. With the fusion there will no longer be a JGS but only one Trotskyist face. The name that the organization will assume is generally conceded to be Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs. There was some objection raised to this name—that it was ouvrierist and the name Ligue Socialiste Révolutionnaire was projected for adoption. The leadership recommended that this be left aside for the fusion congress to discuss and decide.

Krivine gave the international report. It was generally of a broad public character. In fact they had arranged for the press to be there and to carry an appearance that the conference was a delegated one. The press unfortunately didn't appear. Krivine dealt with LA only in passing—saying that the revolutionary army in Argentina was applying the line of the last world congress. He spent a little time talking about the operational and structural problems of the movement—the weakness of our cadres and the need to develop them, the lack of organizational know-how, the lack of professionalism and the need to allocate resources to develop a professional staff etc.

The congress started off with alternate translations—French to Flemish or vice versa. The overwhelming majority of the national committee comrades spoke Flemish, although they were also acquainted with French—sometimes they corrected the translators. At one point the translating forces broke down from exhaustion—with Emile saying that he would make a Flemish translation on the way back in the car. So for a short period to our surprise there was no Flemish translation. Krivine must have overheard my or Manon's comments. He told Manon that it was really a matter of little concern—the translating from French to Flemish was really just a sort of courtesy—as he said all the Flemish comrades knew French—understood it. However suddenly there was a rukus from 7 or 8 comrades—and they picked up the translating again.

There is a really national question. Manon and I were not sure where the hostel was and so we asked some workers coming out of a pub where it was—first in French and then in English—they protested that they didn't know either but were Flemish in the same way I have heard ~~Kren~~ Quebecois protest their francophonie.

This congress is a sort of windup operation for the JGS. Over the May 30-31 weekend the JGS will be fuzing with the Belgian section. My impression is that the JGS is actually taking over the section. The major report was a balance sheet of the past couple years of experience. There was no political documentation—that will come I would suppose for the coming weekend. So it was what might be called "low level."

My overall impression was generally favorable. There was a small scattering of high school youth ~~but~~ the bulk of them were older young people. I would say in their late 20's—university students—possibly many of them doing post graduate work, some of them professionals, school teachers etc., a couple of younger workers. There were quite a few women comrades who are obviously leading activists. A tendency appeared at the conference and their reporter was a woman. One of them gave a report of women's liberation work which she is involved in—I gather the group is some kind of extension of the Dutch Dole mein movement

The congress was held in a university hall. It was hard to make an accurate count of those attending. It was of course a membership conference, not a delegate conference of the all-Belgian JGS which one of the comrades said has a membership of about 200. The number of delegates voting on a key resolution was 123. I think there might have been another 25 persons there—there were a couple of comrades from Holland. The congress was well organized. The chair ran the meeting efficiently, the discussion was generally orderly, the sessions came off on time. They brought a mimeograph and typewriter to the meeting and managed to get the amendments to the documents and other material out to the delegates in time for the sessions as they proceeded. One of the comrades attributed the difference between the membership and the attendance to the exams, financial drians confronting the comrades what with the Commune celebrations coming and then the Belgian section congress.

The leading comrades, the chief spokesmen for the executive were obviously Eric Corojin, Emile Vancœulin and that comrade who came over for the YSA-YS congress. Charlier also played a prominent role in the sessions but as a supporter of the tendency. Neither Ernest nor Gisela put in a show although Ghent is very close to Brussels.

Emile lead off the congress with the balance sheet report of the past period of work. He was followed by a spokeswoman for this tendency designated by the title of a document that has been circulating for only about 10 days before the congress. On allons-nous. Later in the sessions this tendency which was recognized de facto announced that it was a tendency—but the chairman declared that the national leadership did not recognize it as such—this went unchallenged—possibly just lost in the voting confusion as they commenced to go overtime. This tendency is composed of about 7 apparently leading comrades among them Charlier

I think that Manon and I have to say that we really cannot define this tendency politically. Manon has since been able to study their document and still is not really able to define it in a satisfactory way. It opened up with a fairly sharp attack on the operating record of the leadership—for lack of exchange of experiences, lack of exchange of information, general bureaucratic mismanagement. From the response I would gather there is considerable dissatisfaction throughout the JGS with this leadership. However my impression is that the leadership has been working towards transforming the group with its centrist origins into something like a Bolshevik operation.

Among the amendments that this tendency presented to the congress is one that the leadership of the 4th international should intervene and provide one comrade with organizational and political capacities of an obvious character to be placed on a temporary basis in the national leadership, a comrade who wouldn't be mixed up in the debate, this comrade should play a role of a stabilizing influence, a unifying influence who would facilitate our fusion with the 4th international—literal translation.

Yet it appears clear that the Belgian movement has not developed a clear position on this whole matter—at least we have been unable to obtain any material prepared by them. We had a discussion with the two comrades who took us home and the one comrade who had been in the movement ten years expressed great concern about the matter but could not tell us of any important material that we could obtain—only a book by Renard and a really old one—a debate between Vandeveld-De Man. W will be speaking to Weinstock about this. Somewhile back I sent him all our discussions on Quebec

A few incidental observations; There is considerable concern and confusion about the significance and character of the general strike in Belgium in 1961—whether it was a pre-revolutionary situation etc. It appears that this has not been established in the movement. Emile in his report characterized the entrism experience in Belgium as having been a catastrophe. While we were unable to make a satisfactory characterization of the tendency nonetheless Emile in his summary hotbed up the situation against the tendency. They have to be defeated, he said, They have a coherent line he protested. But unfortunately he did not sketch out their line. I told Emile that I would like to have a talk with him about the congress when I come back after the Commune, and he ~~expressed~~ readily agreed. Incidentally at one point in the discussion Charlier stated that he had a sharp disagreement with Ben Said, about some aspect of the ideas that he expressed in his book Mai 1968—Repetition Generale and that this disagreement was expressed in an internal bulletin No 6. He also said that Ben Said has replied to him in a recent issue of Partisan (apparently one with some articles on Rosa Luxembourg. We might look this up. I intend to phone Charlie and see if we can get together upon my return. He struck me as extremely uneasy during the congress and while I made some gestures his way he never responded.

I will be going to Paris on Saturday for the Commune celebrations. Connie and Al will be busy and will stay here for a tendency discussion which of course is quite important—there is also an IMG NC meeting. I will take over the Pathfinder material and put on a big display so we can take orders. Manon will be speaking in Brussels at rue d'Espagne on Thursday and will join me in Paris with another Canadian comrade who is arriving here in London tomorrow. So we will have a three person operation anywhere whether anyone comes over from your area or not. I intend to take the Pengs down to the meeting on the Saturday night.

I can read the copy of Joe's reply to Livboete before giving it to Manon—I see there is another copy in the works for me. When here in London Connie and Al showed me Joe's report to the SWP plenum which I never received a copy of—strikes me as even more important since it sketches our general ~~strategy~~ attitude to the majority and our feeling about the overall situation in the Fourth. You should bring me over a copy of that Joe.

comradely

Ross

If you can make a good buy on a cassette recorder Joe I would appreciate it. English prices are higher than Belgium. Don't go to a lot of trouble. Possibly there is some expert comrade who would be pleased to pick it up—and they are light to carry.

May 16, 1971

Under the banner of Lenin and Trotsky ! Under the banner of the Fourth International !

On May 16, in Paris, in the demonstration in commemoration of the Commune of 1871, these ~~slogans~~ ^{words} took on a mighty material form.

How many times have ~~these words~~ ^{they} been invoked at small meetings and in modest celebrations, ~~by~~ ^{of} revolutionists across the world? How often have they climaxed declarations and manifestos appearing in small circulation papers, expressing through the images they conjure, the purity of our aim, the continuity of our ideology, the ~~herosm~~ ^{heroism} of our struggle ~~our~~ ^{and} confidence that once again they will rally to their side new forces that will forge the vanguard party, which at the head of the class, ~~along~~ ^{and} assures victory in the epic struggle launched by the Communards one hundred years ago?

As the ~~waves~~ ^{sea} of crimson flags that bore forward the giant banners enscribed with the images of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky flooded out of the main gate of the Pere Lachaise cemetery into the Boulevard de Monilmontant, word that the state radio said we are 35,000 ~~ricoched~~ amongst us. Thirty five thousand ! The police were later to estimate 3,500, and then 10,000. Le Monde and France Soir reported 30,000

But there was not mistaking —20 ? - 30 ? - 40,000 —the vast throng of revolutionaries who filled the area in front of the main gate of Pere Lachaise had rallied under the banner of Lenin and Trotsky and the Fourth International—in answer to the call of La Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvriere, now in the process of unifying their forces.

It was miserable weather as the first contingents were gathering, four hours earlier, in the square in front of the Church of St-Jean-Baptiste.

The rain lifted, and then came again. But these young men and women, the overwhelming majority in their ^early ^wenties, ~~bright-eyed~~ ^{wide-eyed}, confident, even joyous, their numbers growing and pushing back up the streets and lanes that feed into the square, remained fast in the areas designated by the marshalls.

The light breeze lifted the ~~my~~ flags and billowed out the ~~my~~ banners that ~~declared~~ ^{their} solidarity with the Polish struggle for socialist democracy, victory for the Vietnamese, and those ~~that~~ ^{ed} designating the various contingents in the leading sector--the German section of the Fourth International, the Swiss, Austrian, Danish, Italian, Swedish, British, the Belgain, and a makeshift one raised by a handful of Canadians which rallied some passing-through U.S. revolutionists beneath it.

A mood of impatience to declare ourselves to Paris--and to the people of the entire world--begins to develop. We express it through scorn at the police helicopter that ^tinspects us in continuous sweeps from high above. The marshalls who line the square, wearing crash helmets and armbands emblazoned with the hammer, sickle and figure four, shout out slogans, snatches of verse and songs. They are picked up from one squad to the other--~~and then the growing~~ ^{and then the growing} crowd responds. One that ends with outstretched arm, four fingers extended and shouts of 4th International--^{4th International} strikes a wide response.

At last! We move off! The rain has lifted. As we surge into the winding streets and through the squares

we catch a glimpse of our comrades before us and our comrades who are coming up behind us.

Red banners shimmering against the spring green of the trees and the blue of the sky--blood of our martyrs and blood of life. The cries of another May echo once again up the faces of the buildings, the slogans and chants of 1968

What do the men, women, children who stand at the windows and on the balconies think? Some on the streets smile approval. Gauchistes? Not at all what the Socialist and Communist party spokesmen denounce. These are sons and daughters of Paris, orderly, disciplined, serious^{and} determined--about disturbing events in Poland--and a new France you project so far into the future that not even the children will see it.

We have hardly reached our stride--when we face the north gate of the cemetery. Suddenly a hush descends upon us. We move down the lane and pass by Le Mur des Fédérés. Flowers have been placed there in remembrance^m of our fallen.

Have the Communards ever before had such homage? The speakers address us in the square--the rain sifts down on us

and we are not really listening. Our eyes take in the whole vast assembly and then look ^{(from one person to the other.} ~~at each other.~~

no doubt many of us are thinking: — Que faire ? Vas Tun ? Where do we go from here?

~~Yesterday~~ On Friday over 50,000 Parisian metalworkers demonst-

rated in solidarity with the Renault strikers. This morning

10,000 youth gathered ^{ed} in Montreuil at a festival in support of

the CP Youth journal. Over 1,000 women are at Versailles at

the Congres de l'Union des Femmes Francais. How to get to them?

~~With~~ "With this lever" -- Trotsky's words on the significance of the Fourth International, addressed to his U. S. co-thinkers, ^{well up} ~~flashed~~ -- "with this lever in hand, we are all, a 11!"

That's it! It's like a pyramid! But a completely inverted one. From this point--here--through a whole series of *united front* ~~max~~ actions, around immediate issues of the day ^(involving masses in struggle) -- upwards -- to the Commune!

"New thousands who will enter its ranks tomorrow will probably be deprived of necessary education. By common effort we will elevate their revolutionary level.... ~~the program of the Fourth International will become~~

commune--5

~~the~~ the program of the Fourth International will become the guide of millions and these revolutionary millions will know how to storm earth and heaven."

Who can doubt it--standing here--this May 16th.

May 21, 1971

New York

Dear Jack (Barnes, Sup?)

When Joe brought back the slip I gave him dealing with travelling expenses he suggested that I should write you direct.

When he got here on the 20th--I had about \$1.50 US on me and owed Alan and Connie in England 25 pounds---\$60.00 in US funds. So you can see right at this moment with a full week and a couple of days to go ~~for~~ in the month of May I am forced to use June funds.

I have been operating on a very tight budget. The only funds that I spent that anyone could claim I did not need^{to} is the cassette recorder that Joe brought--\$50 US--in all the time that I have been here since February 19. That doesn't seem to me to be very much cake in the diet.

Of course I can live on \$50 a week--particularly rent free. I have lived on ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ less all my life--well, since about 1946 anyway.

Of course there are a few unusual expenses here in Brussels. Airmail expenditures are high--for the various articles and clippings that I have been sending to ICP--and to Labor Challenge, along with regular reports on developments to Joe and to Toronto. I have kept no record of this but by now it must amount to considerable. Then too I purchase a lot of publications--you can't write on the Br labor scene from Brussels, or the election developments etc etc without buying a lot of papers. The Times cost 36 cents a copy and at turning points in some development I am thinking of writing on I will buy 3 or 4 papers a day for several days. That totals up. I bought a couple of pairs of ~~max~~ socks and a couple of shirts since here because when I came through NY as you requested I could not carry any luggage that looked more than a weeks incase I might get stopped at the US -Cdn border

And now I am going to have to buy a pair of shoes--which are expensive here.

It seems clear to me that if you can handle travelling and phone expenses that I incur I am alright on the \$50 plus rent. They total 143.32. These expenses should drop over the next period for to my knowledge there are not many congresses slated right now. Then again I should take a trip to Sweden--perhaps--even if they at this time may not be able to finance it through my speaking at the university etc. Such a trip would cost a little bit

Here are my travelling expenses from Feb 19 to May 19

Luxemburg to Brussels--forgot to tally -est	7.00	
Br to Paris	7.30	
Paris to Br	8.30	
phone to London	5.80	
"	3.80	
Br to Turin	27.30	
Turin to Paris	16.50	
Paris to Br	8.30	
phone to Br	4.32	
Br to Cologne	5.75	
to Sam Ghnet	1.75	
Br to Britain	14.00	
Britain Britain to Paris	25.00	
Paris to Br	8.20	143.32

Now that I type this up it is very obvious that it is impossible to operate here on less than \$50 a week plus travelling expenses ---which as I got it from Barry we had agreed on anyway. ~~Thi~~ that 143.32 is not very far from what I owe Commie and have overdrawn on the June allowance. ...125.00. I have paid one gas-hydrobill \$32.38 out of pocket--another whopper is due--fortunately it hasn't come. In fact it is obvious that I need this amount right now as I will be incurring heavy expenses over this very next weekend --for the French congress. I have been staying at Krivine's and while he is extremely gracious--I am against it. I hope they have some cheap hotel arrangements but they may not. Then too there should be a little money here for emergency---When I was in England I came across some books we should pick up. Last night I saw a couple here. I am going to take Joe to see them and he can decide. However ...

comradely

Ross

I am writing the Canadian comrades to send me funds to cover an airfare return. It seems absurd that I should be stuck here should any emergency arrive.....have to go up and borrow from Gisela

June 9, 1971

Dear Joe and Barry;

A short note to record some comments I made to Mary-Alice.

Yes, I am convinced that it is necessary for us to effectively intervene in the coming French cadre school (July 17-23) carrying over to the United Secretariat meeting of July 24-25

I see the minutes of May 22-23 are quite explanatory--in fact ~~the~~ from the ~~minutes~~ projections in the minutes even more important than I thought, from the discussion at the meeting itself

It is obvious that it is in many respects, from the European point of view certainly, a dress rehearsal of the coming world congress. All the key cadre of the European sections, and particularly of the Ligue Communiste, those comrades who will set the tone for the discussions in the cells and branches and the special congress the LC is holding for international discussion will be there. We cannot afford not to be there ~~and~~ And presence is of course totally inadequate. We must be there with comrades who can intervene really effectively--who know exactly what is being said--all the nuances and who can intervene effectively. ~~The~~ Language is a key problem. It will not be enough to have one or two comrades who can present an already worked out document in the French language, and who from then on in at best get the main drift. We need comrades who can follow everything that is being said on their own and who can participate not only in the formal sessions in a flexible way but who can establish relations with European comrades who appear to be open to our influence.

From what I know circumstances thrust the Canadian movement into the fore. I do not know how many comrades of a leadership calibre ~~that~~ and who are completely articulate in French that you have there. In my opinion we have four, unfortunately none of them women comrades. We have Dick, John R, Art Y, Alain B--and even possibly Jean H. I do not think Manon is ready for such a challenge yet.

If we agree on the importance of this July week, then we have to start to make preparations right now. I think that I can say right now--although with no authority from the Canadian comrades, that we can finance one comrade and that we are prepared to make another comrade available for this project.

If two Canadian comrades of the required calibre are to go then preparations must be made immediately. It ~~will~~ may require adjusting the publication schedules of the papers, the holidays etc etc. Political preparations will be necessary. The persons going over should get together with other leading comrades--Peter must be brought into these along with others.

I think that it is necessary for say Joe to write ^{Jean} Pierre as to the publication schedule for the French edition of his contribution. I raised the question with Jean Pierre and Edith and I am afraid they do not anticipate its appearance until August sometime. A letter from Joe stressing the need for it to be out and available at least for the July week--and it should be out and around before that---will be the only way we will get action. If they take the position that it is absolutely impossible to get

it out by then ---well we will have to get to work on the translation in Canada.

So we are already somewhat pressed to make the key decision---our attitude to this week long cadre school and what we are prepared to put into it.

I think an effective intervention on our part can have a big impact. In my opinion Dick F is a really fine polemicist--John R is an excellent and sensitive educator et etc So we are on this occasion in a good position to intervene.

I am sending a copy of this letter to both Montreal and to Toronto. I would take it that you will contact them as soon as possible to give the comrades your general opinion so we can make preliminary preparations.

Tomight I will be phoning Connie. I assume that you have received her letter of the 6th with the good news about Glasgow. This afternoon I will finish reading the new documents she enclosed. I see she wants at least two comrades. to be there for discussions. Off hand I cannot see the need --all the more that with this Glasgow development I would think the majority will be inhibited from taking anyreally drastic actions--probably content itself with censure of Alan. I see the big guns didn't rally for the key London aggregate discussion.

At anyrate I will be there---I am staying over for the June 26-27 meeting and then returning to Canada. I assume one of you will be coming over for the 26-27. Why not have that person land in England on the 17th or 18 My first reaction was that it is just as well that no ~~American~~ U.S. comrade be there to be confronted with stupid statements that it may be thought necessary to answer--however Connie's request looms important in my mind.

So I will mail this tomorrow morning after talking to her Thursday morning prior to Bureau meeting.

So I had a long talk with Connie last night--\$4 worth. She and the tendency are in good spirits. Somewhat tired I gather. She is of the opinion that the IMG leadership will probably not take any actions against the tendency. She thinks that they see the solution to their probel problems in the International. Nonetheless the atmosphere is one of extreme hostility. It appears that Pat J has put out another one of his letters blaming the tendency for the time that it is taking up, the money that is being consumed in materials--and the lack of their political preparations for the congress. From the recent documents they are turning the mad dogs in the ranks on the tendency and creating an atmosphere that anything goes. Possibly they hope that the tendency will bolt--but it wont. Noetheless Connie is anxious to have talks--I gather more after the congress than before. I told her of my proposal above--that I would be there and that possibly one of you for the U.S. and the IMG before. I also told her about the money problem and the importance as I see it of the French cadre school. She wants me to come over the Wednesday before the Congress which I will do. I will write later today or tomorrow after the bureau

fraternally

Ross

June 10, 1971

Dear Joe and Barry;

We held the first bureau meeting since Ernest went on holidays. The one planned for last week which I agreed to go to Paris for didn't come off. I went to Paris alright ~~to find~~ to find the meeting called off unilaterally and to miss Mary-Alice. The net gain was that I read three back issues of Intercontinental Press going there and back, on the train.

Pierre came here for this one. We commenced as soon as he arrived at 11 and ended at about 1.15--and I managed to read all the correspondence that had come in except of course material in languages other than French and English. So in my opinion it was a good meeting and they had no complaint. Nothing really very important but some incidents of interest.

Under the cadre school I raised the matter of Joe's contribution to the discussion on L.A. Pierre's reaction was that it was unreasonable to expect that it would be out in time for the discussion at the school. I stressed its importance but to no avail--we won't have it. Pierre made a few comments along the line that he did not know why Joe wrote at such length--many comrades won't read it anyway even when it is translated. It appears that it would be too much for the European mind. So now you have to make a decision on that. I think if we made it right away that the Toronto and or Montreal comrades could get it out so that it could be taken over by whoever you decide to have go over. Toronto and Montreal could split the job between them--but time is important.

Breakthrough. The Cypriot comrade(s) wrote a letter of a couple of paragraphs stating very loudly and clearly that they agree with Joe's contribution all down the line and that they want the short statement to appear in the bulletin.

The statement on the imprisoned Chinese comrades is nowhere to be found. Apparently Ernest and Gisela looked high and low. Vergeat found my note which I composed with Peng to be added but not the main body. Big search on with V looking high and low, questioning Charlier who apparently drew up the main body and finally an agreement ~~xxxxxx~~ by Pierre to see if Peng has a copy. Pierre incidentally went out to see the Pengs a week or so ago. He gathered that their son had been under psychiatric care before and was under sedatives that he never came out of. I again raised the matter with Pierre of some young French comrade who speaks English going out to see them once a month or so.

Correspondence from Ceylon suggested that ~~that~~ the projected idea of sending possibly Pierre there to launch an investigation or inquiry into the enforcement of the war measures act there and the murderous assault on the JVP was not a practical one. For several reasons--one of them that the government itself has felt it necessary to give to pressure to investigate rumoured excesses by the police and army against the citizenry. Bala's ~~xxx~~ the CMU's--democratic protests and somewhat formal legalistic approach is causing considerable unease among our friends although it seems to me to be essentially correct. You know after all their talk I find that Uphali is still not there and probably won't be there until several weeks. At any rate I decided in our overall interests to open up a bit of a discussion on this fellow, my doubts about his outlook, his capacity to achieve anything that we might hope and the danger of him blowing things up. Surprisingly they affirmed all that I said--he is ultra left, sectarian hard to work with etc etc. It appears that sometime before he had a blow up with Bala but it appears that the latter is ready to give it a go again. The friendly discussion ended up with Pierre saying--that anyway he is going to go on his own if we don't send him....so what can you say. They even know what they are working with

Looking back--when vergeat stalled as the crisis developed I should have taken the allocated money and gone off to Ceylon. I have done almost nothing as it is of what the Canadians anticipated of me--would have missed all these conventions--but it would have been a good experience

I am not sure just how this came up--what point on the agenda that I had roughed out but ICP came under attack again--along with the Mole. Pierre expressed great irritation that the English language press did not give a real play to the Paris Commune demo--didn't seem to understand the significance and great value of such an action, such numbers under the banner of the PI. I personally came out of this very well of course as Vergeat very quickly while agreeing with Pierre mentioned the article that I had written along just that line. I hope the Canadian papers carried my article. I do not know whether it missed the last ICP deadline or you did not think it a ~~very~~ good article. I will see next Monday when ICP come in. Vergeat attacked ICP for always carrying material from Le Monde and never picking up material from Rouge. But Pierre thought it correct to carry the Le Monde article--prestigious to his mind. They both expressed astonishment that the most recent Militant contented itself with picking up the Le Monde item so long after. I suggested that my article probably missed the deadline as possibly did Alain's photos he said he would send ---and that due to staff problems my impression was that the Militant followed a policy of relying entirely on ICP for international news. Pierre widen his criticism of the British --for not sending any leading comrade to the Commune Action-- I think they are irritated also about the poor delegation to the LC congress. They did not say a word about the handling by ICP of the ~~Argentine~~ Argentine events--which I thought might come out in the course of such a discussion.

The Swedish comrades are holding their congress August 27-29 and a cadre school in July that wont conflict with the Br and French school--so that means I take it July 11 to 16. Their congress is the weekend after the August U.S. meeting and of course they know English---in fact I seem to recall that they often speak English to overcome language divisions. Possibly we can do something about someone going to it... although it is on the tail end of the Canadian educational week. The main topics of the congress are youth work, university and high school work, women's liberation.

Apparently the Greek comrade who has been putting out the paper in Frankfurt is turning it over to some young Greeks here in Belgium. I do not have much of an impression of their background. They have drawn up some material in French--I will try to get through it tomorrow

When you get the agenda for the coming U.S. meeting you will see Livio is listed to give a report on Cuba. I suggested that we should make a statement on the Padilla case. Vergeat agreed--Pierre doubtful--so I suggested that he let ~~xxx~~ Livio know our opinion. You will recall the Irish commission will be coming up.

That is all of any importance I think on the bureau.

Some incidentals;

We should send whatever women's liberation material we can on a regular basis to Alex Weisgal, 14 rue St ~~de~~ Guillaume, Paris 7, France. She is completely English speaking and reading and I think head of the LC women's commission. The Canadians should make sure she is on Velvet Fist mailing list

Charlier would like Joe's document to go to Guy Desolre, 121 rue des Trois Tilleuls, Bruxelles 1170, Belgium

Do you have John Glenns new address; John Glenn, 148 Chico Street, project 2, Quezon City, Philippines.

It appears that Canadian papers are still going to the old IMG address at 8 Toynbee Strret London. I gather that the present LC bundle going to Pentonville is adequate--for the present at least.

The best book on Algeria-Pierre recommends is a Maspero title written by Lacheraf

We should pick up a copy of the book Shipwreck of a Generation by a J Berger. published by Harvill 2 pounds 50 s. According to a recent review he was a leader in the Palestine CP, interned in Stalin's concentration camps where he met Trotskyists and others.

I never did get around to writing up the May 22 U.S. meeting.

Here are a few things still of some possible interest.

Before the opening of the meeting I spoke to Jordan about my having heard that one Brian Slocock was a member now of the IMG and SL. He affirmed that I told him that I assumed he knew Slocock had been a member of the Canadian section and while we had not formally expelled him it was only because it would have been like a boss who when a worker says he is going to quit tells him "no you're not. I'm firing you." Slocock had tried to carry out a split from our movement and he himself broke. Pat said nothing--was ~~embarrassed~~ embarrassed.

In the balance sheet of anti-war action discussion--Ernest expressed concern as to what the SWP might do when the war ends--he made a prediction that it's got one year to go--then where will the SWP ~~be~~ ~~be~~ since the movement has been a single issue movement. Fears the co-option of the anti-war movement by the Democrats and worried about a bridge to the workers. Apparently he intends to expound on these matters at the next U.S. meeting. The French who missed the ball this April 24 period are apparently now considering getting moving in this area. In the French area of Switzerland it was not possible for the various groups to unite in common action and our own forces too busy to do anything. The Belgians carried no Vietnam activity this April 24 period--admitted inability to organize national action and intention to rethink the whole problem. Report on Commune demonstration. Surpassed LC anticipations. Only Paris Lutte Ouvriere participated--1,500 to 2,000

Under report on finances there was quite a little stir over fact that ~~xxxx~~ SWP contribution more than wiped out by Joe's ~~xxxx~~ coming here and it's in debt to ~~xxxx~~ south

Ireland--according to official minutes the IMG proposal for the striking off of an Irish commission is to be discussed at next U.S. meeting but my notes very clearly have it being referred to the bureau. This commission idea was raised before and I mistakenly went along with it. Joe sharply opposed it--at today's bureau when this was mentioned while drawing up the agenda for the coming meeting Vergeat expressed uneasiness that we were in for another conflict. Pat's proposal to circulate the international discussion bulletin was opposed by Livio and I think Ernest

Britain--Jordan in his report said not a word on the electoral victory of the Labor party--nor on the big Common Market dispute until raised by Ernest

French cadre school--expect 150 to 175 French to come--20 Swiss, 30 Belgians, 20 Italians. Of the total of seven days two are going to be working commissions, dealing with various areas of work of the sections--student, anti-imperialist, teachers, workers etc. reports to be written

Ceylon--great consternation. Big anticipations, not based on substantial facts but under the euphoria of armed struggle, not realized.

What we previously knew about the state of LSSP (R) and circumstances of Bala completely forgotten, shoved aside. Hence a whole series of criticisms of Bala, of the movement there, of the information that Bala gave us but which it seems to me they with their high anticipations grossly misinterpreted. Vergeat sees the movement there as being of a European type not prepared for guerrilla action. Alain very much disturbed by line of defense being taken by CMU--French embarrassed before members. Joe brings a bit of sanity into discussion--asks why were our comrades caught by surprise with JVP development--radicalization not just on country ~~side~~ but on the campus too--didn't comrades think there was going to be a student radicalization. Proposed that correction of certain "facts" should come from Ceylon.

should check on what Bala said in fact and what was said in particularly Rouge--verge's articles. According to Uphali Bala exaggerated on the united front with the JVP--he sees our Ceylonese paralyzed--not sure that they can take advantage of situation--their paper doesn't seem to be coming out. Pierre sees the problem that we are caught up in the CMU, the party was the tail, our forces were surprised by events and didn't react properly. We thought that the imperialist united front lining up behind the government would cause great uneasiness amongst masses. We should have sent someone there. Alain expresses the LC embarrassment--comrades want to know what the CMU has said in the events. Bala confronted with a dilemma--stick to union or go with JVP--uneasy about the line of the CMU demanding the restoration of civil right with argument that the government itself admits JVP not a danger. Livio--our comrades did not understand the peasant problem--no real connection with Indians and Sinhalese, denied rural population was a factor. Livio up tight about the south's covering letter with Domingo's --Pierre thinks the letter very sad, casts doubts on the integrity of comrades

fraternally

Ross

They are trying to jack up the rent on the apartment--by making an extra charge on water. I stalled payment. Will check with most what the customs are here and the lease---

Bruxelles
June 23, 1971

Harriet SWP
Dear Joe and Barry

Arrived back here last night from spending the week in England and attending the IMG congress on the 19th and 20th.

No doubt the most important congress I attended. My comments are more speculative than those I wrote on the Ligue Communiste congress as we witnessed at the IMG congress only a small part of what is a process which I think ~~will~~ ^{may} well have grave implications in the unfolding dispute in the movement and may be the opening of a whole new chapter in the struggle to build the Fourth. How to begin?

Bob Pennington in a boastful mood to one of the tendency in a pub dispute said that he was out to take over 40% of the ~~seats~~ ^{seats} on the incoming NC. He achieved that. The 40% figure Pennington gave ~~was not~~ ^{didn't} flow from a concept of representation but control. Pennington now has control of the leading body of the IMG.

Of the old 18 member ~~committee~~ NC plus alternates -- 8 have been dropped, 2 have been demoted from member to alternate. Only 11 of the old NC remain on the new NC which totals now 22 members. My name spellings may be wrong here--I think it is worth giving them as some of us know the Br leadership better than the leadership of the other sections. Dropped from the last NC -- Renney, Phil Hirst, Leonora Lloyd, Tony Southall, Atcheson, Uphall (leaving the country) Pat Frid as she joined the tendency, and Tony Gorton as they cut down tendency representation. Pennington tried also to dump Tessa Vangelderren and Dave Kendal. Kendal made it but not because of Tariq's impassioned speech (it appears that he is actually editor of the Mole in T's absence and actually worked out the grand strategy against the Black Dwarf which they consider a masterly maneuver) but because in a huff Marie-Therese Weal who was on the Nominating committee slate as an alternate, resigned in his favor.

There are 30 members all told--22 full and 8 alternates. The top four posts were given to Pat J, Tariq, Julian A, Peter Gowan but from then on down Pennington moved in. Of the 22 full members Pennington has 7 solid voters plus three alternates and another probable five supporters. The tendency has two full members and one alternate. The old leadership ~~was~~ composed of Pat J, Tariq, Julian Atkinson, Peter Gowan, Bob Purdy and the Weals and Dave Kendall (8) are not exactly a homogeneous group and the others are notable for playing ~~separate~~ ^{separate} solo roles but subject to Pennington's pressure.

The Pennington forces are definitely a tendency even though they never declared themselves as such. In fact they had everything so whipped up against the TENDENCY that they were able to claim and win acceptance that everyone else, all the rest of the delegates were ~~against~~ ⁱⁿ a tendency at the very outset of the congress on the basis that ~~it was~~ ^{they were} against the TENDENCY. The Jordan-Ali current showed a bit of awareness of what was happening on the second day when they paraded up to the nominating committee but they were steamrollered--they repeated and added to every hysteria against the TENDENCY, went completely along with depriving the TENDENCY of any voice in the elections of the NC members and alternates when it obviously could have been very useful to them to turn back Pennington. The TENDENCY ~~is~~ ^{is} small as it is holds the balance of power.

Perhaps in that situation the TENDENCY could be said to have missed the ball--however it seems obvious to me that the Pat-Tariq group would have viciously repulsed any TENDENCY approach or at least ~~would~~ ^{would} if it really knew what was going on would have been afraid to. touch the TENDENCY.

The TENDENCY played an excellent role. The vote on the main resolution was 11 for the TENDENCY 51 against. The tendency now has 25 members in the 200 member IMG. The situation has improved qualitatively. Not only has the old guard matured but it is not nearly so dependent on Connie. All of them proved to be very articulate, very developed. Tony Roberts expressed the TENDENCY's views extremely ably and if reason could prevail ~~the~~ would have carried the day with his contributions. Anne Black of Nottingham was really phenomenal--it seemed to me that Alan H has developed further as a leader. The performance of Connie and all of them was all the more remarkable as they were continually harassed, their contribution cut down drastically time wise, etc etc. The other aspect to the qualitatively favorable development of the TENDENCY was the adherence of 8 comrades from Glasgow. They struck me as very able comrades. Several of them made excellent contributions

How to define the Pennington tendency? While the whole leadership has continuously poisoning the atmosphere against the SWP and the TENDENCY, Pennington and Co add ~~inexplicable~~ considerable venom against cooling things, from their ~~point of view~~ view of the International. While Livio, Pierre, Ernest and the LC to some considerable degree determine the line and conduct of the Pat J -Tariq group they are apparently looked upon with contempt by the Pennington group. While Tariq and Pat J's group flounder around here and there Pennington has ~~got~~ a machine in operation--while the former talk about their stupid line Pennington refines it and acts and attracts those who want to act. Some of the comrades define Pennington as ouvrierist. But I do not think this is a suitable definition. Yes, he is oriented to the workers but his attitude to the student youth around the IMG is not that they should be standing outside of the factory gates distributing leaflets and papers telling the horny-handed sons of toil what to do. He would shame them and harass them as petty bourgeois and drive them to actually go into the shops. He would orient the IMG to a considerable body of English workers, in the shops who are generally ultra left-sectarians. ~~In fact he is entirely bourgeois school.~~

He is a machine politician of a vicious type, a factionalist of the Healy school. Contentious of ideas, impatient with discussion armed with a couple of essentially crude ideas, cutting out slashing here and there. There was strong comedy in many of their stances--tragic-comedy of course. From Pennington a couple of simple ideas delivered with a pseudo comradely style that never missed an opportunity to slash at the TENDENCY. From his leading spokesmen particularly one John Ross who demonstrated positively sadistic pleasure in debate more erudite attacks, more irrelevant and more vicious.

The Pennington tendency tended to define the Tariq-Jordan current as petty bourgeois and itself as proletarian, the Tariq-Jordan current as talkers and itself as militant, aggressive activists. It questioned Marie-Therese's qualifications, challenged harshly Dave Kendal's, attacked Tessa Vangelder as ineffectual, dumped Southall to replace him with Williamson who apparently is transparently a Pennington stooge, established despite protests a fellow named Turner on the NC ~~with the same~~ one of his Oxford clique who ~~was~~ only a short while before ~~had been~~ dropped ~~from the IMG~~ for irresponsibility and inactivity.

The IMG's abstentionist position on the labor party has probably been ignored by the Pennington group with its ~~an~~ industrial orientation, but this congress saw them completely reverse the IMG position to an essentially correct one. The latest issue of the Mole runs a lengthy article by John Ross. ~~which~~ Pat told the congress during his report on the political resolution that this article on the LP is embedded in the resolution. Everything was heading towards the fusion of the IMG and Spartacus League ---this is Tariq and Pat's line. Pennington was going along with it. ..but this congress saw him reverse his position---the matter has been tabled.

This we have a ~~what is~~ situation where Pennington has a majority and has established his line

What is his line----????--- It is the same as the SLL's

more to come

TENDENCY

In the course of a contribution to the discussion on youth John Roberts claimed that the IMG does not do solid work in any of the areas that it talks a great deal about--for instance the big action in solidarity with the Irish, in Birmingham involved only 20 comrades. He scored all the talk about factory implantation as there are no concrete proposals and as for the much talked of action committees--they don't even exist. He attacked the way that IMG fusion with the SL has been posed--how can you build it--this is doing irreparable harm to our work in this key area. We should be moving in the opposite direction with the youth--getting their own paper, their own center and taking on some full time staff. Linda Smith of Glasgow disagreed with Connie for not making the industrial working class central--not for rejection of student-women etc but distinctly peripheral, must take decisive orientation to the industrial proletariat. Stressed need for a functioning industrial caucus and sending some workers to Glasgow. We all agree on the youth radicalization she said but we can't carry mass youth work as we do not have the forces to do so.

Bob Braxton warned against the danger of the congress concentrating on the tendency--he doesn't consider the tendency as a political opposition but as an organizational disaster. Nonetheless he stated that the perspective document presented by Pat J is absolutely unclear--and that it is largely youth orientated when ~~we~~ if we don't concentrate on the industrial proletariat, making this our center, we won't make any gains from the periphery. He thought that fusion of the S

July 13, 1971

Belgium

Dear Comrade Gisela and Ernest;

I am returning the \$100 U.S. that you thrust into my pocket as I was departing last month from Bruxelles.

The Canadian movement could put it to good use however it is not possible for me to take it.

As you will recall when I asked on behalf of the section ^{for} some kind of allowance in view of the extremely burdensome expenses that we incurred in transferring the Canadian comrades from England when such physical aid was ended upon IMG request and then the expense of transferring the comrades from Bruxelles back to Canada, the matter went before the United Secretariat. It was refused on the basis that the budget that had been drawn up made for no such allowances.

It was of course correct that it should have been dealt with in some formal way. Had the \$100 been formally agreed to as some form of compensation to the Canadian section for its more recent expenditures in keeping me operational for the previous 4½ months of my latest stay, I would have taken it--however I do not know that this is so.

Is it possible that this \$100 is a gift to the Canadian comrades from your own personal resources? If it is I hope you will not consider my returning it a violation of a fraternal gesture--but I do not know that it is.

comradely

Ross Dowson

I hope that you have taken a few swigs of the Drambuie that I told you I had to leave in the apartment. If you haven't already done so--why not drop in and polish off the bottle with Maralyne, Dick and Alain.